# PREPARING FOR THE MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

A Handbook of the Presbytery of Lake Huron's Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation (COMMP) for those discerning a call to the ordained ministry of Teaching Elder/Minister of Word and Sacrament.

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## Preparing for The Ministry of Word and Sacrament

## A Handbook of the Presbytery of Lake Huron's COMMP for Ministry Preparation

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# SECTION I: ENTERING THE PROCESS

## Welcome to the Discernment Process

- **This process is about what kind of ministry God wants you to pursue.** It's not a matter of 'if' you are called to serve, it's 'how' you are called to serve. While you may or may not eventually be ordained to the order of ministry of Teaching Elder, you have been called to ministry since your baptism.
- **The call to professional ministry is different from any other calling.** There are qualities and characteristics you will need which cannot be taught in seminary.
- **Excellence in academic training is not always indicative of pastoral readiness or fitness.**
- **The process is not about certification, involving a list of requirements to check off culminating in ordination.** It's possible that you could fulfill all requirements and not be called to this order of ministry.
- **Everyone's process is different.** Your seminary colleagues and friends might be asked to fulfill requirements that are slightly different from what you are asked to fulfill. This is based on individual life experiences, gifts, and growing edges.
- **This process is about individual self-development and discernment.** Both Teresa of Avila and John Calvin believed that finding oneself is crucial to understanding God.
- **Your understanding of your own call could change throughout this process of discernment.** Be open to experiencing a variety of contexts so that your call can be clarified and affirmed.
- **The responsibility to progress in the process is in your hands**. It will be your opportunity to display professionalism, initiative, and responsibility.
- **The process of Preparation for Ministry is not easy.** You will be told information that will be difficult to hear and receive, but COMMP is charged with both supporting you and ensuring that you are as well-prepared as possible for professional ministry.
- **You are moving from being cared for as a parishioner to caring for others,** and you will need to find new ways to be supported.
- **Please call on your advisors and other mentors generously.** You will have a Session Liaison from your home congregation, a COMMP Liaison, professors, field education supervisors, and your home pastor all willing to offer support and accountability. We can also refer you to spiritual directors and counselors. Please use us - we are here to support and encourage you.

## The Discernment Process

The preparation for ministry process involves two phases: Inquiry and Candidacy. These two phases are designed to explore the call, evaluate the gifts, and support the preparation of people who feel called to the ordered ministry of Minister of the Word and Sacrament (also called Teaching Elder or Pastor). As referenced in the Book of Order G-2.0501, G-2.0502, G-2.0601, both the Inquiry Phase and the Candidacy Phase of the process evaluate the individual's development in five key areas:

- **Education for Ministry,** which includes evaluation of the individual's academic potential and progress and the individual's ability to relate the academic learning to the ministry of Minister of the Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder);
- **Spiritual Development,** which explores with individuals their personal faith journeys and their spiritual practices to discern the will of God in their lives;
- I**nterpersonal Relations,** which provide opportunities to reflect on how an individual relates to others, one's own leadership style, and what this means in terms of the ministry of the Teaching Elder (Minister of the Word and Sacrament);
- **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;
- **Professional Development,** to help persons develop specific skills that will enhance their effectiveness as Teaching Elders (Ministers of the Word and Sacrament) and as presbyters. Those skills should include and understanding of one's ministry context and the ability to deal with conflict that may emerge in the place one serves.

It is important for inquirers and candidates to understand that an educational process and the Presbytery of Lake Huron's process, which is consistent with G-2.06, must both be completed prior to ordination. While they interconnect, the educational institutions and the presbytery operate independently. **It is the responsibility of the inquirer or candidate to coordinate the completion and the timing of those processes. Please note, PC(USA) requires a minimum of 1 year as a candidate and a minimum total of 2 years total in the process.**

## Becoming an Inquirer

If you are reading this handbook, you have already taken steps toward exploring your own calling in ministry. That is what inquiry is all about! In our denomination we do this together. To come under care of our presbytery as an inquirer there are certain steps to take:

1. To be enrolled as an inquirer you must be a member of a congregation, and active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least 6 months. (As referenced in the Book of Order, G.2-0602). We also require that you are at least 18 years old.
2. Discuss your sense of call with your pastor (or other PCUSA ordained minister if your church is between pastors).
3. Complete Forms 1A, 1B, 1C* and begin 1D and turn into your Session (usually through your pastor). *Note: Our presbytery does NOT require that you fill out form 1C however you might find it helpful for your own discernment. You can find the forms at: https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process/
4. Start exploring different seminaries if you are not already enrolled in a seminary. Seminary is part of the ordination process and while you may attend any seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Studies, we highly suggest that you enroll in one of our PC(USA) seminaries.
5. Complete a background check through Lake Huron Presbytery. (You can find the form at: presbylh.org in 'documents and forms' under 'miscellaneous'.) Results will be sent to your session and the Ministry Preparation Team.
6. Contact your pastor to 1) arrange to meet with the Session to request their endorsement*, and 2) to notify COMMP's Ministry Preparation Team. *Note: prior to meeting with you, we advise Sessions to meet with a representative of the Ministry Preparation Team for orientation on the process.
7. Meet with your Session. Make sure you give them ample time to read through Form 1 prior to the meeting. This is a time to share your call with your church leadership. They will assign a liaison to encourage, pray for, and support you, Complete Form 1D and begin Form 2B with your Session.
8. With the help of your pastor and Session Liaison, arrange to meet with the Ministry Preparation Team. Begin to work on the growth objectives in 2A. At least a week in advance of the meeting, you will need to forward a copy of Form 1A, 1B, 1D and what you began on 2A and 2B. This is a time to share your call story. Be yourself. We are excited to be partnering with you to explore your call. During the meeting, we will complete 2A and 2B together and assign you a COMMP Liaison.

Did you complete step 1-9? Congratulations! As soon as all the signatures are completed on Form 2B, you are an official Inquirer of the Presbytery of Lake Huron! We are excited and honored to partner with you in exploring your call.

## SECTION II: INQUIRY

### During Inquiry

During Inquiry, we will continue to discern and explore your unique call together. To do this, we ask that you prioritize the growth objectives that we outlined together in Form 2B. In addition, we also ask that you:

- **Read and Sign our Sexual Misconduct Policy**. You can find a copy of this at: http://www.presbylh.org/misc/documents-and-forms/
- **Keep in Contact with your Liaisons.** We want to celebrate with you your accomplishments and support you in your struggles, and of course, pray for you. Share with your liaisons about what is happening in your life and studies.
- **Enroll in a Seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Studies to work on a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree.** If you have not yet done so, we highly suggest you enroll in one of the PC(USA) seminaries. You'll need a course in each of the following before you graduate: Hebrew, Greek, Exegesis of the Old Testament, Exegesis of the New Testament (Book of Order, G-2.0607c).
- **Complete a Psychological Assessment.** You are required to complete this within one year and this must be done prior to candidacy. This assessment is a confidential document which will only be made available to Ministry Preparation Team members and yourself. However, if you choose to become ordained, we will need to share the results upon request of the presbytery in which your first call resides within (as attested on Form 6). Currently, you can have this done through Midwest Career Counseling, LeaderWise, Samaritan Counseling Center of SE Michigan, and Ministry Assessments (Atlanta), however we are open to additional suggestions. We anticipate that the cost of the psychological assessment will be divided evenly between your Session, the presbytery, and yourself. However, if a financial hardship exists, scholarships can be made available.
- **Take the Bible Content Exam.** As soon as you feel prepared, consider taking this first ordination exam. You can find out more about this exam here: oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/bible-content-exam/
- **Meet for an Annual Consultation**. At least once a year, we ask that you and your Session Liaison meet with our Ministry Preparation Team. Complete Form 3 and forward to your COMMP liaison at least 1 week prior to the meeting. We will complete Form 4 together. You can find these forms here: https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-annual-consultations/
- **Consider Field Education and Clinical Pastoral Education**. Prior to ordination, you will be required to complete field education (an internship at a church in a different setting from the home congregation, and under supervision of an installed pastor) and it is highly recommended that you also complete at least one unit of clinical pastoral education (a chaplaincy internship in a clinical setting). CPE greatly expands your professional opportunities and knowledge of self. This

can be done during the candidacy phase as well. Consult the Ministry Preparation Team for your specific parameters as what may be appropriate for your preparation for ministry might be different than another Inquirer or Candidate. You will need to receive approval from the Ministry Preparation Team prior to enrolling in either experience.

- **Work on any Additional Requirements**. Your process may look different than others based upon a variety of differing situations. During your meetings with the Ministry Preparation Team, we might discern together that additional Field Education, Clinical Pastoral Education, specific classes (including Presbyterian Polity or Reformed Theology), or other requirements might help you on your journey.

## Becoming a Candidate

After spending some time exploring your call in the Inquiry phase (we require at least 1 year), you might feel ready to move on to Candidacy. The purpose of the Candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation to serve the church as Teaching Elders (Ministers of the Word and Sacrament). 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. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a Teaching Elder (Minister of the Word and Sacrament) shall include the completion of the requirements in this handbook, and an affirmation of the candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment. (G-2.0607a) To move to Candidacy there are certain steps to take:

1. Notify your COMMP Liaison that you'd like to move towards Candidacy. Verify with your liaison that you've completed all requirements needed including 1 year of inquiry.
2. Complete Form 5A found here: https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-advancing-candidacy/
3. Complete these 5 statements: (Please limit each to 1 page, single-sided, 12 point font with your name included on each page). We recommend you review finished statements with your COMMP liaison prior to presenting them (you may want to consult a professor or colleague as well for revision/editing).
    a. A statement of your understanding of the Reformed Tradition (See Book of Order F-1.01 through F-3.04.)
    b. A statement of your journey of faith.
    c. A statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church
    d. A statement of self-understanding which reflects your personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health

e. A statement of the candidate's understanding of the task teaching elders perform, including a self-awareness of specific gifts for the ministry of Word and Sacrament and of areas in which growth is needed

4. After Form 5A and the 5 statements are completed and sent to your Session, schedule with your Session Liaison and COMMP liaison a time for assessment.
5. Meet with your Session so they can enter into a discussion of mutual discernment with you on these statements. The Session can formally recommend your candidacy through completing Form 5B.
6. Send completed Form 5A, 5B and 5 statements to the Ministry Preparation Team. Meet with the Ministry Preparation Team to review your application to Candidacy. The Ministry Preparation Team will need to approve your recommendation to the presbytery that you be received as a Candidate for Ordered Ministry. If approved, we will complete Form 5C together.
7. Upon receiving recommendation from the Ministry Preparation Team, we will schedule you to come to the next meeting of the Presbytery of Lake Huron. During the meeting, you will have time to share your Journey of Faith Statement. You may be asked about your faith journey, but we will not ask you any theological questions at this time.
8. Upon presbytery approval of the recommendation, the presbytery shall receive you as a Candidate and the Moderator of the presbytery will ask you these questions:
   a. Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the ordered ministry of Teaching Elder?
   b. 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?
   c. Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
   d. 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, and your name shall be recorded on our presbytery's roll of Candidates. The proceedings shall close with prayer. Form 5D is completed.

Did you complete step 1-8? Congratulations! You are a Candidate for ordered ministry in the Presbytery of Lake Huron! We are excited and honored to partner with you as you continue to prepare to become a Teaching Elder.

## SECTION III: CANDIDACY

### During Candidacy

While inquiry is about exploring your call, Candidacy is about fully preparing you so that you can serve as a Teaching Elder (Minister of Word and Sacrament). To do this, we ask that you prioritize the growth objectives that we outlined together in form 5C. In addition, we also ask that during this phase you:

- **Continue to Keep in Contact with your Liaisons.** We want to celebrate with you your accomplishments and support you in your struggles, and of course, pray for you. Share with your liaisons about what is happening in your life and studies.
- **Continue your seminary studies in moving towards completing a M.Div. degree.**
- **Complete the Bible Content Exam.** If you have not yet done so, complete the Bible Content Exam until passed.
- **Pass the Four Senior Ordination Exams.** You can find more information about these exams here: https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/senior-ordination-exams/
- **Meet for an Annual Consultation**. At least once a year, we ask that you and your Session Liaison continue to meet with our Ministry Preparation Team. Complete Form 3 and forward to your COMMP liaison at least 1 week prior to the meeting. We will complete Form 4 together. You can find these forms here: https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-annual-consultations/
- **Take Field Education and Consider Clinical Pastoral Education**. You are required to complete field education and it is highly recommended that you also complete clinical pastoral education. Please note, you must complete your field education in a different setting than your home church. Consult the Ministry Preparation Team for your specific parameters as what may be appropriate for your preparation for ministry might be different than others. You will need to receive approval from the Ministry Preparation Team prior to enrolling in either experience.
- **Work on any Additional Requirements**. Your process may look different than others based upon a variety of differing situations. During your meetings with the Ministry Preparation Team, we might discern together that additional Field Education, Clinical Pastoral Education, specific classes, or other requirements might help you on your journey.

## Final Assessment

As you approach finishing your final preparations to become an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament, and you want to begin looking for a call, the next step will be your Final Assessment. In Final Assessment, the Ministry Preparation Team discerns whether to certify you as ready, pending a call, to be examined for ordination. Normally, you can only begin to start looking for a call and negotiate into service after you receive your certification of readiness.

At Final Assessment you will need to show that you are indeed ready to begin ordered ministry. Before you begin, make sure you have done all of the following:

1. At least 1 year, each, of Inquiry and Candidacy
2. Field Education (G-2.0606)
3. Any add'l requirements as discussed with the Ministry Preparation Team in Inquiry and Candidacy (see completed forms 2A, 4 (from all annual consultations),and 5C)
4. Shown your wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute and sound judgment (G-2.0607a)
5. Sent the Ministry Preparation Team a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, from an accredited college or university (G-2.0607b)
6. Sent the Ministry Preparation Team a transcript from your seminary that shows you have graduated or are about to graduate with a M.Div. and that your M.Div. included at least 1 course in each of the following areas: Hebrew, Greek, Old Testament Exegesis with Hebrew, and New Testament Exegesis with Greek (G-2.0607c). (Your grades will need to be considered satisfactory by the Ministry Preparation Team as well.)
7. Passed all of the standard ordination exams (Bible Content, Theology, Exegesis of the Old or New Testament, Polity, and Worship and Sacraments) (G-2.0607d)
8. Notified your COMMP and Session Liaison that you'd like to be finally assessed

Once you have completed the above, you may meet with the Ministry Preparation Team for Final Assessment. To prepare for this you will need to send in at least 1 week in advance of the meeting:

1. A Statement of Faith (3000 characters max. including punctuation)
2. A Written Sermon
3. A description of the contemporary need to which your sermon is addressing (2-3 pages)
4. An exegetical interpretation of the biblical material out of which the sermon arose (2-3 pages, optional: use Tom Long's 11 Point Exegetical Approach Attached)
5. A Preliminary Personal Information Form (PIF) https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/personal-information-form/a.org)

During your Final Assessment meeting, the Ministry Preparation Team is responsible to determine that you have indeed shown readiness to begin ordained ministry as a Teaching Elder. Candidates can demonstrate this readiness by:

1. Presenting evidence of competence in the fields of Reformed Theology, Bible, the Polity of the PC(USA), and Worship and Sacraments (Usually this is done through passing all of the ordination exams)
2. Presenting evidence of ministerial skill attested through the supervised practice of ministry (Field Education, and when applicable, CPE)
3. Expressing theological views that are compatible, in the opinion of the presbytery, with the confessional documents of the church
4. Expressing understanding of the meaning of the questions required for ordination (W-4.0404) informed by knowledge of the church in diverse settings and attesting that you are willing and able to fulfill these requirements
5. Revealing commitment to service as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with personal maturity, spiritual depth, and a capacity to respond to the needs of others, including colleagues in ministry
6. Presenting your written sermon (we may ask for you to preach this sermon).

While conducting final assessment, the Ministry Preparation team will also discuss with you:

- Continuing development of your self-understanding in the role of pastor
- Understanding the congregation you will serve in terms of its history, ethos, programs, and status in the community, and in relation to the denomination
- Establishing an appropriate pastoral relationship style for the specific ministry context
- Dealing with conflict that may emerge in the congregation or ministry setting
- Resources and programs available to you once you are an ordained pastor, including new pastors seminars, seminary debt assistance programs, presbytery mentor programs, and pastor support groups.

After discussion, you may be asked to leave the room. The Ministry Preparation Team will vote on whether you are ready to be certified. Just as in becoming an Inquirer or a Candidate, the team might not think that you are ready just yet. If this is the case, we will complete Form 4 together identifying specific goals to meet. If we do vote in favor, we will complete Form 6.

Form 6: https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/forms-complete-cpm

Is your Form 6 complete with all the signatures in place? Congratulations! You are a now Certified ready to receive a call as Candidate for ordered ministry in the Presbytery of Lake Huron! We are excited and honored to partner with you as you begin to seek a your first call and through your ordination.

## Seeking Your First Call

As a Candidate certified as ready to receive a call, you can now begin seeking your first call and negotiating for service. Traditionally this is done through posting your PIF to the Church Leadership Platform as well browsing calling organizations (typically churches) Ministry Information Forms through the Opportunity Search found here: https://clc.pcusa.org/OpportunitySearch.aspx

Although you have passed Final Assessment, you still are under care of the COMMP at Lake Huron Presbytery as a Candidate. The covenant relationship between yourself, the Presbytery and your Session has not yet ended. Candidacy requirements still apply, such as annual assessments.

We want you to be aware that just as professional skills and readiness in other fields can atrophy over time if not kept in practice, the same is true of theological education and the practice of ministry. (This fact has been recognized by the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates (PCC), which now advises that presbyteries should not consider standard ordination exams as providing useful information regarding a person's 'readiness to begin ministry' for more than five years.) That is to say, it is expected that you continue to maintain the skills you've developed during the preparation process while seeking your first call. Although we never would like it to get to this point, the presbytery can remove your certificate of readiness if we have reason to believe that you are no longer ready to assume the responsibility of the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

## Ordination

Have you received a call to a church or validated ministry? Congratulations! Please, first let us know! From here on out, you will need to work openly with both your presbytery of care (Lake Huron) and your new presbytery of call.

When you are offered a call, you negotiate your terms of call with the search committee, following the policies of the presbytery to which you have been called. When all is in order, the congregation will vote on your nomination and your terms of call.

When you are elected by the congregation you will ordinarily be examined on your statement of faith by the presbytery of the call, following the processes and procedures in that presbytery.

If you receive a call outside of a congregation your call must be validated by the presbytery within whose bounds you will be serving. Be in touch with the COM moderator of that presbytery to understand the process they will follow to validate your call. Once your call is validated you can be ordained.

Ordinarily, your ordination and installation service takes place in your presbytery of call (although you can have your ordination service in your presbytery of care) (G-2.0702). Wherever you choose to have your service, you will need to work with that Presbytery to establish your ordination commission and obtain all the necessary materials. You'll want to consult the Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning section of the Directory for Worship in the Book of Order (W-4.04) for vital information regarding the service.

Upon Ordination, you are released from care and sent with blessings and love! Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your process in preparation for this wondrous calling.

## SECTION III: Other

### Exceptions

**Requirements for Ordination except Final Examinations:** As stated in G-2.0610, when a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If you feel you have a good and sufficient reason to have a requirement waived, please notify the Ministry Preparation Team through your COMMP liaison.

**Requirement of Final Examinations:** As stated in G-2.0610, if a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. A full account of the reasons for any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

**Negotiating for Service prior to Final Assessment:**

An "authoritative interpretation" issued by the 219th General Assembly (2010), and reaffirmed by action of the 220th General Assembly (2012), clarified that under specific conditions a presbytery could approve a candidate to "negotiate for service" even before it had "certified [that] candidate ready for examination for ordination, pending a call.")

Section [G-2.0607] allows a candidate to enter into negotiation for his or her ministerial service, even if the candidate has not had his or her final assessment from the presbytery's committee on preparation for ministry (In LHP this is the Ministry Preparation Team), provided the candidate

- has completed two full years of theological education (or the equivalent thereof)
- has had an annual consultation within the last year
- has satisfactorily completed all the standard ordination exams or received certification of readiness under [G-2.0610]
- has received the approval of the candidate's Ministry Preparation Team

If the Ministry Preparation Team has approved a particular candidate who meets all the aforementioned requirements to enter into negotiation for his or her ministerial service, that candidate may circulate a Personal Information Form or other biographical information.

## Transferring to another Presbytery

At your request, with the approval of the sessions and presbyteries involved, your relationship with LHP as Inquirer or Candidate can be transferred to another presbytery. (G-2.0608) If transferring as a candidate, form

## Leaving The Process Prior to Ordination

At sometime during the process, you might feel you are no longer called to the particular ministry of word and sacrament. If this happens, it is okay. Sometimes the most faithful choice is to leave the process. After you have consulted with your pastor, mentors, and liaisons, you can be removed from the process. Most likely, COMMP will advise you to first take some time to discern this decision. You'll need to officially consult with your session (usually through your pastor and liaison) and the presbytery (usually through your COMMP liaison) to be removed (G-2.0609).

Also, it is possible that the presbytery, for sufficient reasons, remove your name from the roll of inquirers and candidates. If this is done the action will be reported to the session and yourself, and if appropriate, to the educational institution in which you are enrolled. Prior to this, we will make a reasonable attempt to give you an opportunity to be heard concerning the proposed removal (G-2.0609).

## Acronyms and Other Helpful Information

- **ACPE: Association of Clinical Pastoral Education**
- **ATS: Association of Theological Schools**
- **CLC: Church Leadership Connection**
- **COM: Committee or Commission on Ministry**
- **COMMP: Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation** (The Ministry Preparation Team is a part of this Commission)
- **CPE: Clinical Pastoral Education**
- **M.Div.: Masters of Divinity Degree**
- **PC(USA): The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America**
- **PLH: The Presbytery of Lake Huron**

- **The terms 'Minister of Word and Sacrament' and 'Teaching Elder' are interchangeable in the PC(USA).**

## The Session Liaison's Responsibilities

- Facilitates the relationship between the Session, the person under care and the Ministry Preparation Team
- Submits necessary forms to the Session via the Session Moderator and the Clerk of Session.
- Attends Ministry of Preparation Annual reviews with the person under care if at all possible, and/or arranges for the home pastor to attend such reviews as well.
- Contacts the person under care at significant times during the preparation process, such as Inquirer and Candidacy reviews, annual and special consultations with CPM, appearances before Presbytery, academic examination periods, ordination examination periods, when a call is being negotiated, and when ordination takes place.
- Keeps personal information confidential.
- Remember the person in prayer. Learn his or her background, resources, and challenges. Find ways to stay in touch.
- Take an interest in his or her particular activities related to preparation for ministry such as Field Education, course work, Committee on Preparation for the Ministry annual consultations, and the Ordination Exams.
- When possible, share with the CPM any areas of particular need about which you are aware whether they be financial or personal.
- Initiate conversation with the Session on the possibility of providing financial assistance or other tangible support.
- Become familiar with the "PLH Handbook for Ministry Preparation" of the Presbytery in order to be able to assist with requirements and procedures and to provide support at times such as appearances before Presbytery Assembly, annual consultations, ordination examinations, etc.
- Be present at any meeting of Presbytery at which the Inquirer/Candidate will appear, including the service of ordination and/or installation after a call is received.
- Be supportive, sensitive and understanding of the Inquirer/Candidate's spouse and family. Inform the Session and/or CPM of better ways to assist spouses in preparing for their new roles

## The COMMP Liaison's Responsibilities

- Be the COMMP Contact Person for your Advisee. Serve as an advocate and explain the process.
- Balance the shepherding and gatekeeping roles. Communicate both concerns and encouragement to the Advisee. Be honest and kind.
- Put a human face on the process. Remember your Advisees in prayer. Initiate communication with Advisees at least twice a year and meet face-to-face whenever possible.
- Discuss the Advisee's developing faith and sources of spiritual growth. Help Advisees get in touch with their strengths and weaknesses.
- Review the following for each advisee: psychological assessment report; transcripts; CPE evaluation (if applicable); Field Education evaluation, transcripts, ordination exam grades. These are all confidential.
- Keep Advisees on track. Remind them periodically of requirements for each step of the process. Ensure all needed documents are received before the next step in the process.
- Set Advisee meeting dates with the Ministry Preparation Team at least annually, requesting agenda docket time as each Advisee requires.
- Follow up each Advisee's CPM meeting with a conversation.
- Keep careful records of all conversations and communications and note fulfillment of all requirements.
- Work with Advisees in preparing Candidacy statements, exegesis, and sermon. Preview each statement before it is submitted.
- Be in contact with the Inquirer's/Candidate's Session Liaison.
- Attend the Presbytery of Lake Huron's Assembly meeting when your advisee is to be presented for move to Candidacy or Ordination. Be the calm and non-anxious presence assuring them they are ready for this move.
- Offer to assist the Candidate in preparing a Personal Information Form (PIF)
- Communicate (financial funds available/other resources)

## Checklist of Overview of the Process

The list below is to help as a visual guide and tool for the process. In no way is it meant to bypass the rest of this handbook. As each process is unique, you might have additional steps that are not listed below. If you choose to use this checklist, you should add in any additional requirements as well as the dates of completion.

### Entering the Process

___ Member of a Church for 6 months

___ >18 years old

___ Discussed sense of call with your pastor

___ Complete Forms 1A, 1B, and begin 1D and turn into the session (via the pastor)

___ Start exploring different seminaries

___ Complete a background check through Lake Huron Presbytery

___ Meet with your Session to request endorsement and complete Form 1D and begin form 2B

___ Begin to work on Growth Objectives in Form 2A

___ Send a copy of 1A, 1B, 1D, and what you began on Form 2A and 2B to the Ministry Prep. Team

___ Meet with Ministry Prep. Team and Complete Forms 2A and 2B

### Inquiry

___ Read and Sign Sexual Misconduct Policy

___ Enroll in Seminary

___ Complete Psychological Assessment

___ Take Bible Content Exam

___ Complete Form 3 and Meet for Annual Consultation with Ministry Preparation Team

___ Update Session Liaison

___ Update COMMP Liaison

___ Work on Growth Objectives outlined in 2B

___ Consider Field Education

___ Consider CPE

___ Additional Requirements:

### Applying for Candidacy

___ 1 year of Inquiry

___ Notified COMMP Liasion of desire

___ Complete Form 5A and 5 Candidacy Statements and send a copy to Session

___ Schedule with Session Liasion and COMMP Liaison a time for assessment.

___ Complete Form 5B with Session

___ Send Form 5A, 5 Statements, and 5B to Ministry Prep. Team

___ Meet with the Ministry Prep. Team and complete form 5C

___ Appear before the Presbytery of Lake Huron and share Journey of Faith Statement

___ Approval from PLH for Candidacy and Complete Form 5D

**Candidacy**

___ Continue Seminary Studies moving towards a M.Div. degree

___ Pass Bible Content Exam

___ Pass Polity Ordination Exam

___ Pass Worship Ordination Exam

___ Pass Theology Ordination Exam

___ Pass Exegesis Ordination Exam

___ Complete Field Education

___ Consider CPE

___ Complete Form 3 and Meet for Annual Consultation with Ministry Preparation Team

___ Update Session Liaison

___ Update COMMP Liaison

___ Work on Growth Objectives outlined in Forms 4 and 5C

___ Additional Requirements:

**Applying for Final Assessment**

___ 1 year, each, of Inquiry and Candidacy

___ Send College Transcript and Seminary Transcript to Ministry Prep. Team

___ Complete Statement of Faith, Written Sermon, Description of Contemporary Issue and Exegetical Interpretation and send to Ministry Prep team.

___ Complete a preliminary PIF and send to Ministry Prep. Team

___ Meet with Ministry Prep. Team

___ Complete Form 6

**Final Steps**

___ Seek 1st Call (traditionally through uploading PIF to Church Leadership Platform)

___ Complete Form 3 and Meet for Annual Consultations until Ordination

___ Continue to work on Growth Objectives

___ Maintain developed skills

___ Receive offer for 1st Call

___ Negotiate Terms of Call

___ Congregation approves Call pending examination

___ Examination by presbytery of call following processes and procedures in that presbytery

___ Work with PLH and presbytery of call together

___ Arrange Ordination and Installation Service

___ Become Ordained! Thanks be to God!

**Tom Long's Exegetical Approach**

(Can be used for preparing the Exegetical Interpretation for Final Assessment)

1. Select the text – How was it selected?
2. Place the text in its larger context
3. Reconsider where the text begins and ends (pericope)
4. Establish a reliable translation of the text
5. Read the text for basic understanding
6. Explore the text historically.
7. Explore the literary character of the text
8. Listen attentively to the text (brainstorming)
9. Explore the text theologically
10. Check the text in the commentaries
11. State the claim of the text upon the hearers (including the preacher)

Focus –

Function –