

## INTRODUCTION

Those exploring ordination as a teaching elder/minister of word and sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are embarking on a journey with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (the "CPM") of the National Capital Presbytery ("NCP") and individual Liaison Groups ("LG") within the CPM to assess and develop the sense of call, and, if there is a calling to ordination as a teaching elder/minister of word and sacrament (rather than to some other form of ministry), to prepare for ordination. The steps along this journey are ultimately prescribed and guided by the Book of Order and in particular the following provisions:

### **G-2.06 PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

#### *G-2.0601 Nature and Purpose of Preparation*

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.

#### *G-2.0602 Time Requirements*

To be enrolled as an inquirer, the applicant shall be a member of the sponsoring congregation, shall have been active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least six months, and shall have received the endorsement of the session of the sponsoring congregation. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.

#### *G-2.0603 Purpose of Inquiry*

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.

#### *G-2.0604 Purpose of Candidacy*

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.

#### *G-2.0607 Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service*

A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a teaching elder without approval of the presbytery. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination 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. satisfactory grades, together with the examination papers 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.

**Book of Order (The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)) Part II 2011-2013**

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Informed by the Holy Spirit, the CPM is guided by these provisions in its work with all who come to journey together with us.