

# ORDINATION PROCESS IN THE PC(USA)

*(as it finds expression in Pittsburgh Presbytery)*

**Book of Order G-2.06**

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

- All required forms are available online at [http://www.pghpresbytery.org/committees\\_commissions/comm\\_files/cpm.htm](http://www.pghpresbytery.org/committees_commissions/comm_files/cpm.htm)
- All PC(USA) forms linked at the above site are in writeable PDF format and can be saved to your computer then emailed. Please do not send hard copies of any form to the presbytery.
- During all phases of the care process, a student CANNOT move to the next step without first contacting his/her Care Team. The Care Team is responsible for submitting all requests made to the commission on behalf of the student.
- **IF AN INQUIRER/CANDIDATE IS OUT OF CONTACT WITH HIS/HER CARE TEAM FOR TWO OR MORE YEARS, THE COMMISSION WILL VOTE TO REMOVE HIM/HER FROM THE ORDINATION PROCESS.**

## Phase 1: Applicant → Inquirer

A	1. A person desiring to become an Inquirer talks with Pastor/Session about his/her desire to explore the personal implications of becoming a minister. <b>NOTE: The individual must be a member of the sponsoring congregation for at least 3 months and active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least 6 months (G.2.0602).</b>
P/S	2. The Pastor/Session of the sponsoring congregation contacts the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) for orientation to the process used in Pittsburgh Presbytery if it has been more than three years since the last orientation. A CPM representative meets with the session.
A	3. The person desiring to become an Inquirer submits completed Form 1 (parts <a href="#">A</a> , <a href="#">B</a> , & <a href="#">D</a> ) and Form 2 (part <a href="#">B</a> ) from the Pittsburgh Presbytery web site ( <a href="http://www.pghpresbytery.org/committees_commissions/comm_files/cpm.htm">http://www.pghpresbytery.org/committees_commissions/comm_files/cpm.htm</a> ) or the Presbyterian Church (USA) web site ( <a href="http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process/">http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/prep4min/forms-used-preparation-ministry-process/</a> ) or contacts CPM if no computer access. At this point, the Applicant should begin maintaining a file containing copies of all documents he or she submits as well as all documents received during the ordination process.
A	4. All child abuse (molestation, rape, or endangerment), criminal, and federal criminal history clearances/records required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including FBI fingerprinting regardless of whether the applicant has been a resident of the Commonwealth for the previous ten years, <b>must be received prior to enrollment as an Inquirer into the care process as per the <i>Child &amp; Youth Protection Policy</i> of Pittsburgh Presbytery</b> (approved by the Executive Committee on April 18, 2017). The CPM will reimburse Applicants in full for any such services as is required upon receiving proof of payment and successful enrollment as an Inquirer. If the child abuse (molestation, rape or endangerment), criminal, and federal criminal history clearances/records reveal the Applicant has a documented occurrence, the Applicant will not be enrolled in the care process. For as long as the participant is enrolled in the process, these clearances must be in compliance with mandated time limitations; any renewal fees are the responsibility of the participant.
S	5. Session interviews Applicant and shall make a recommendation to Presbytery. If the Session votes favorably, it assigns a liaison elder, executes, signs and forwards <a href="#">Form 1D</a> and <a href="#">Form 2B</a> to the CPM at least two weeks before the CPM meeting.

A – Applicant

C – Candidate

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CT – Care Team

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CPM	6. Upon receipt of Form 1 (all parts) and Form 2B, CPM assigns a commissioner, who meets with Applicant for a "Pre-Care Consultation" to review forms, to give an overview of the process, to explore the Applicant's sense of call and to provide a copy of the <a href="#">Standards of Ethical Conduct</a> of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Applicant signs <a href="#">Acknowledgement of Receipt</a> of the <i>Standards of Ethical Conduct</i> .
A/EL/CPM/CT	7. Applicant, with liaison elder, meets with CPM. Liaison elder speaks about the action the Session took concerning the Applicant. CPM interviews Applicant. If CPM votes favorably to enroll the applicant, this action is reported to Presbytery. A Care Team is assigned to the Inquirer, and <a href="#">Form 2B</a> is signed by the chair of CPM and distributed. A permanent file is started at Pittsburgh Presbytery which will include all forms, reports, exams, transcripts, correspondence, and other pertinent documentation.
	<b>Congratulations! You are now enrolled as an Inquirer. The two-year time requirement of G-2.0602 begins at this time. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a Candidate.</b>

## Phase 2: Inquirer/Inquirer → Candidate

CPM	1. Inquirers are gifted by the CPM with the following: <i>Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers</i> by Donald K. McKim; <i>Presbyterian Polity for Church Leaders</i> by Joan S. Gray and Joyce C. Tucker; current <a href="#">Book of Order</a> ; <a href="#">Standards of Ethical Conduct</a> ; and <a href="#">Acknowledgement of Receipt</a> form.
I/CT	2. The Care Team shall meet with the Inquirer for an "Initial Consultation" within the first 90 days after coming under care and contact the person's references to discuss personal traits, character, work history, etc.
I	3. Inquirer is required to send copies of undergraduate college and seminary transcripts (the latter submitted annually until successfully earning Master of Divinity or Master of Divinity equivalent) and Field Education Reports to CPM (G-2.0604).
I/CPM	4. CPM strongly recommends Inquirers take the <a href="#">Bible Content Examination</a> during the first year of enrollment. Approval is not required from CPM. The Bible Content Examination is given twice each year: the first Friday in February at 10:00 AM / registration deadline preceding December 31 and the Friday before Labor Day at 10:00 AM / registration deadline preceding July 31. Inquirer executes the <a href="#">online application</a> and submits to the Presbyterian Church (USA) office in Louisville along with fee. CPM will reimburse Inquirer for the first time the exam is taken upon receiving proof of payment. Re-takes are at the expense of the Inquirer.
I/CPM	5. Inquirer selects a spiritual mentor and informs CPM of the person's name, address, email, and telephone number. If the Inquirer is married, a mentoring couple is also selected and CPM is informed of the couple's name, address, email, and telephone number. Inquirers and Candidates must meet with spiritual mentor at least 2 times a year. It is strongly recommended that a meeting with marriage mentors be held at least 2 times a year. Care Team will discuss this at each annual consultation.
I/CPM/CT	6. Inquirer is required to complete an <i>Entering the Ministry Assessment</i> at an approved evaluation center* and release the results to CPM (see <a href="#">Release of Entering the Ministry Assessment Form</a> ) within six months of being enrolled as an Inquirer. The cost will be covered as follows: CPM – 40%; Session – 40%; Inquirer – 20%. CPM sends a copy of the assessment to the Inquirer's Care Team for their review and places original in the permanent file of the Inquirer. Care Team will discuss the assessment with the Inquirer at the Annual Consultation or at a separate time. Additionally, the Inquirer will participate in a <i>Pastor Competency Profile Evaluation (PCPE) Part I</i> conducted by the Care Team within 12 months of being enrolled as an Inquirer; the Care Team will initiate scheduling this assessment with the Inquirer. This assessment can be completed either as part of an Initial Consultation or an Annual Consultation. Upon completion, the Rating Grid must be submitted to the CPM office (see Part I, page 23 of PCPE packet).

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	<p>*Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute (412-661-1237) is a local approved center at 6324 Marchand Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206</p>
I/CT	<p>7. Annual Consultations are to be held throughout the Inquirer and Candidate phases (G-2.0605).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Inquirer completes Pre-Interview Annual Consultation Report (<a href="#">Form 3</a>) and electronically forwards to the Care Team one week prior to the scheduled consultation.</li> <li>The Care Team meets with the Inquirer and reports to CPM for approval using <a href="#">Form 4</a>. All Annual Consultations become part of permanent file.</li> <li>At each Annual Consultation, the Care Team will discuss the following: sex, substance abuse, money, higher standard to which clergy are held, and how they take care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually.</li> <li>Worship and involvement at a PC(USA) church are required and will be discussed at each Annual Consultation.</li> </ol> <p>NOTE: On an annual basis, the CPM Chair and/or Vice Chair will review with Dean of Students at seminaries those students under care. All Inquirers and Candidates must maintain at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average.</p>
I/CT	<p>8. The Care Team, on behalf of the CPM, advises Inquirer of seminary courses or special training requirements (G-2.0605). All Inquirers and Candidates must attend a seminary accredited and approved by the Association of Theological Schools in USA and Canada. Those attending a non-PC(USA) seminary may be required to attend a PC(USA) seminary for coursework including, but not limited to: Presbyterian polity; reformed theology; reformed worship and sacraments; Presbyterian confessions; and a course utilizing Biblical exegetical interpretation. All students, regardless of where they attend seminary, are required to complete the course work listed above.</p>
I/CT	<p>9. The Care Team, on behalf of the CPM, approves field work or internships (G-2.0605). Field education (FE) in a supervised ministry is required. <b>One FE experience must be in a PC(USA) church and the home church cannot serve as sole FE experience.</b> Therefore, one FE experience must be different from the home church in terms of the type of church. Inquirer/Candidate must enter into a FE experience before moving to Candidacy but not necessarily complete. Care Team must receive and review report from FE supervisor. Inquirer/Candidate has responsibility for ensuring the report is sent to Care Team. Care Team is encouraged to contact supervisor by telephone. Additionally, the Inquirer will participate in a <i>Pastor Competency Profile Evaluation Part II</i> conducted by the Care Team following the completion of FE experience; the Care Team will initiate scheduling this assessment with the Inquirer either as part of an Annual Consultation or at another time. Upon completion, the Rating Grid must be submitted to the CPM office (see Part II, page 33 of PCPE packet).</p>
I	<p>10. Inquirers and Candidates are encouraged (not required) to take Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). CPM reserves the right to require a CPE experience. Reports from the CPE supervisor are required and Care Team is responsible for reviewing the report and contacting the CPE supervisor.</p>
I/CT	<p>11. Inquirer and Care Team determine readiness to move from Inquiry Phase to Candidacy Phase. Inquirer completes Form 5 (parts <a href="#">A</a> &amp; <a href="#">D</a>) from the <a href="#">CPM page</a> of the Pittsburgh Presbytery website or contacts CPM if no computer access. If the Inquirer chooses to have a Candidacy Reception, he/she can also find a form for <a href="#">Planning Your Reception as a Candidate as a Minister of Word &amp; Sacrament</a> (optional) on the website.</p>
I/CT	<p>12. Inquirer writes responses to the six statements listed on <a href="#">Required Candidacy Questions &amp; Personal Statement of Faith</a>.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT NOTE:</b> The response to #6, "A statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition," must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be no longer than 850 words with word count noted at the end of the document and lines numbered down the left side of the page</li> </ul>

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S	13. Session interviews Inquirer then executes, signs, and forwards <a href="#">Form 5B</a> to the CPM with a recommendation. Executed forms must be electronically received by the CPM two weeks prior to the CPM meeting. If the session intends to have a reception service for the new Candidate, the proposed date for that event must be included with these forms.
I/CPM/CT	14. Care Team informs CPM that the Inquirer desires and is ready to move to the Candidacy Phase. The Inquirer, accompanied by liaison elder, is examined by CPM. If CPM votes favorably to advance the Inquirer to Candidate, CPM introduces Candidate to Pittsburgh Presbytery on the floor of the presbytery meeting.
PR/I	15. Presbytery examines the Inquirer concerning his/her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry. If the examination is approved, <a href="#">Form 5D</a> is signed by the chair of CPM and distributed.
PR	16. The Candidate may choose to have a service of reception. Such services are optional and may be held at either the Presbytery meeting or at the home church of the Candidate. If a service of reception is held in the home congregation, the commission reports reception of Candidate has been properly held to Stated Clerk of Pittsburgh Presbytery.
	<b>Congratulations! You are now a Candidate for ordained ministry in the PC(USA).</b>

### Phase 3: Candidate/Candidate → Certified Ready to Receive a Call

C/CT	1. Care Team continues to hold Annual Consultations with Candidate (including those Certified Ready) (G-2.0605).
C/CT	2. The Candidate must seek approval and permission from the Care Team (if time frame of G-2.0602 is satisfied), to take the <a href="#">Senior Ordination Examinations</a> . CPM recommends all four exams be taken at the same time but it is not a requirement. The Senior Ordination Examinations are given four times each year, at the end of January, April, July, and October with registration deadlines on the last day of the month preceding administration. The <a href="#">specific dates</a> for the program year are available on the PC(USA) website. Candidate executes the <a href="#">online application</a> and submits to the Presbyterian Church (USA) office in Louisville along with payment. CPM will reimburse Candidate for the first time the examinations are taken upon receiving proof of payment. Re-takes are at the expense of the Candidate. <b>NOTE: Ordination examinations may be taken a maximum of three times. A third failure of any ordination examination, including, Bible Exegesis, Church Polity, Worship &amp; Sacraments and Theological Competence, will result in removal from the care process.</b>
C/CT	3. A Candidate who has completed two full years of theological education or its equivalent, who has had an Annual Consultation within the previous year, and has successfully completed all ordination examinations may request permission to be Certified Ready to Receive a Call and granted permission to enter into negotiations for service. (G-2.0607)
C/CT/EL	4. The Candidate preaches a sermon by means of the following process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Candidate presents a written sermon to the Care Team with a description of the contemporary need to which it was addressed and an exegetical interpretation following the CPM Exegetical Work &amp; Sermon Guidelines</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Minister of the Care Team, in collaboration with the Elder, is to review the exegetical work of the Candidate</li> <li>• Arrangements to hear a sermon must be made by the Care Team in cooperation with the Candidate and the Session Liaison</li> <li>• The Elder of the Care Team and the Session Liaison are to hear the sermon and elicit feedback from members of the congregation</li> <li>• If neither the Elder nor the Minister of the Care Team is available to hear the sermon, the Care Team may solicit help from other commissioners on the team</li> <li>• The Care Team is to verbally report at the CPM meeting</li> <li>• The Care Team must submit the date and place of the Candidacy sermon to the presbytery office as this is a matter of record and report to Pittsburgh Presbytery</li> </ul>
C/CT	5. The Candidate meets with the Care Team to review the Candidate's one page (850 words maximum with word count noted at the end of the document and lines numbered down the left side of the page) Statement of Faith and the Constitutional Ordination questions (W-4.4003). The Statement of Faith should include a discussion demonstrating an understanding of: the triune God; each person of the God-head; the saving work of Jesus Christ; the Church; Scripture; Sacraments; eschatology; humanity and sin. <b>NOTE: The Statement of Faith presented, defended, and approved at the CPM meeting is the statement that is published and defended on the floor of the presbytery meeting and cannot be altered.</b>
C/CPM	6. The Candidate provides CPM with a copy of his/her statement of faith two weeks prior to the scheduled commission meeting. The Candidate appears before CPM, reads his/her Statement of Faith and is examined by CPM. If approved, the Candidate may request permission to circulate Personal Information Form (PIF) and enter into negotiation for service. <b>NOTE: A Candidate cannot receive a call until they have completed the time requirement of G-2.0602 but may enter into negotiations before completing his/her seminary degree.</b>
CPM	7. CPM reports to Pittsburgh Presbytery the Candidate is Certified Ready to receive a call.
	<b>Congratulations! You are now Certified Ready to receive a call.</b>

## Phase 4: Certified Ready to Receive a Call → Ordained

C	1. The Candidate circulates his/her PIF. <b>NOTE: If you are applying for any ordainable position in Pittsburgh Presbytery, including temporary relationships, it is required by the Commission on Ministry for you to complete and submit a PIF.</b>
C	2. The Candidate receives a call from a church or validated ministry and informs CPM.
C/CPM	3. The Candidate submits to CPM a list of members to serve on a commission for ordination for CPM approval at least one week prior to the CPM meeting using the <a href="#">Planning the Commission for Your Ordination Service</a> form. The Candidate may choose to appear before the CPM again or not, it is the personal choice of the Candidate. The Candidate <b>MUST</b> contact the Moderator of Pittsburgh Presbytery directly (for current moderator contact information, go to: <a href="http://www.pghpresbytery.org/about_us/about.htm#leadership">http://www.pghpresbytery.org/about_us/about.htm#leadership</a> ) to make him/her aware of the service details as the Moderator or his/her designee will be one of five members of the commission. <b>NOTE: A completed draft of the bulletin must be submitted to the Moderator at least one week prior to the service.</b> The Candidate may find service resources on the Commission on Ministry web page at <a href="http://www.pghpresbytery.org/committees_commissions/comm_files/com.htm#installation_resources">http://www.pghpresbytery.org/committees_commissions/comm_files/com.htm#installation_resources</a> .

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CPM	4. CPM certifies the Candidate is ready to be examined by the presbytery and provides copies of the Candidate's Statement of Faith for all commissioners to presbytery (G-2.0702).
PR	5. The presbytery of call to a Candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain and install the Candidate (G-2.0702). If presbytery is fully satisfied with the Candidate's qualifications, the vote shall be to proceed to his/her ordination, appointing a time and place for the service of ordination (G-2.0702).
PR	6. If the ordination is conducted by Pittsburgh Presbytery, an appointed Commission ordains the Candidate and submits a report to the Stated Clerk of Pittsburgh Presbytery.
<b>Rejoice!</b>	<b>The Presbyterian Church (USA) has a newly ordained pastor. Praise be to God!</b>

The above steps represent only positive actions. At various points, negative actions or voluntary withdrawal will terminate the process.

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