

## Ordination Process in Shenango Presbytery

*Based on Book of Order G-2.06 – Ordination in the PCUSA*

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Please read through this document in its entirety *before* embarking on your ordination journey. We want you to know what to expect. Feel free to ask questions along the way.
- While CPM looks forward to accompanying you in presence and prayer every step of the way, moving through this process is your responsibility. Please reach out to CPM with regular updates on your process.
- All Inquirers and Candidates must attend a seminary accredited and approved by the Association of Theological Schools in USA and Canada.
- All required forms are available online at Shenango Presbytery's website.
- If an Inquirer/Candidate is out of contact with the CPM for two or more years, they will be removed from the ordination process.
- The following steps represent only positive actions. At various points, negative actions or voluntary withdrawal will terminate the process.

### Phase 1: Applicant to Inquirer

1. A person desiring to become an Inquirer talks with their Pastor/Session about their desire to explore the personal implications of becoming a minister. **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).
2. A person desiring to become an Inquirer contacts the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) for orientation to the process of Shenango Presbytery. (Your sponsoring Pastor/Session may provide CPM contact information)
3. The person desiring to become an **Inquirer submits** completed **Form 1A and 1B**, which can be found on the Shenango Presbytery website or emailed to you by a member of CPM. At this point, the Applicant should begin maintaining a file containing copies of all documents they submit as well as all documents received during the ordination process.
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, **must be received prior to enrollment as an Inquirer into the care process.** If the 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. All fees are the responsibility of the participant. Detailed information, instructions, and links to obtain clearances can be found on Shenango's website.

5. **The Session of the sponsoring congregation** interviews Applicant and shall make a recommendation to Shenango Presbytery. If the session votes favorably, it assigns a liaison elder, who executes, signs, and forwards **Form 1D and Form 2B** to the CPM at least one week before the CPM meeting.
6. **The Applicant meets with CPM.**
7. If CPM votes favorably to enroll the applicant, this action is reported to Shenango Presbytery.
8. A copy of the Standards of Ethical Conduct of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the **Acknowledgement of Receipt form** are given to Inquirer; the form is **signed by the Inquirer and returned immediately.**
9. **A CPM Liaison is assigned to the Inquirer,** Form 2B is signed by the chair of CPM and distributed. A permanent file is started at Shenango Presbytery which will include all forms, reports, exams, transcripts, correspondence, and other pertinent documentation.
10. Shenango Presbytery receives the new Inquirer at their next meeting.

Congratulations! You are now enrolled as an Inquirer. The two-year time requirement of G-2.0602 begins at the time of CPM enrollment. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a Candidate.

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## Phase 2: Inquirer to Candidate

1. The **Inquirer** is to remain in contact with our CPM for continued conversation about to sense of calling, pastoral identity, personal traits, character, work history, etc.
2. **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).
3. The **Inquirer** must successfully complete the **Bible Content Examination** before moving to Candidacy. Approval to take the exam is not required from CPM. The Bible Content Examination is offered twice a year. The Inquirer executes the online application and submits to the Presbyterian Church (USA) office in Louisville along with fee. Information about all Ordination Exams, including the

schedule, descriptions, registrations, and Exam Handbook are available on the PC(USA) site.

4. **Inquirer** is required to complete an **Entering the Ministry Assessment** at an approved career development center and release the results to CPM (see *Release of Entering the Ministry Assessment Form* on the CPM Forms page) within six months of being enrolled as an Inquirer. The cost will be covered as follows: 30% paid by CPM, 30% paid by session, and 30% paid by Inquirer. CPM reviews the assessment with the Inquirer and places a copy of their assessment in the Inquirer's file.
5. **Annual Consultations** are to be held throughout the Inquirer and Candidate phases (G-2.0605). All Annual Consultations become part of permanent file.
  - At each Annual Consultation, the CPM will discuss with the Inquirer/Candidate their continued sense of call, their involvement in a congregation, the challenges they face, and their calling in Christ to care for themselves (and their families, if applicable) physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
6. CPM, advises Inquirer of any 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.
7. **Field education (FE) in a supervised ministry is required.** (G-2.0605) The FE experience will ordinarily be in a PC(USA) church and the home church cannot serve as sole FE experience. **CPM must receive and review regular reports from your FE supervisor**, so please submit their contact info to CPM. Inquirer/Candidate also has the responsibility of ensuring a report is sent to the CPM.
8. 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 CPM is responsible for reviewing the report and contacting the CPE supervisor.
9. **Inquirer and CPM** determine readiness to move from Inquiry Phase to Candidacy Phase. Inquirer completes **Forms 5D** for the CPM.
10. Inquirer writes responses to the six statements listed on **Required Candidacy Questions & Personal Statement of Faith Form** and sends them to the

CPM. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The response to #6, "A statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition," must:

- 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
- include a discussion demonstrating an understanding of the triune God and the work of the church. The Statement of Faith is to be reviewed by the Inquirer and the CPM prior to making a request to move to Candidacy.

11. The Inquirer is **examined by CPM**. If CPM votes favorably to advance the Inquirer to Candidate, Form 5D is signed by the chair of CPM and distributed. CPM introduces the perspective Candidate to Shenango Presbytery on the floor of the Presbytery meeting.
12. **Shenango Presbytery** is permitted to ask the Inquirer questions as it relates to his/her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry; theological questions are not in order at this time.
13. A vote is taken on the floor of Presbytery to move the applicant from Inquirer to Candidacy. If the motion passes, the new **Candidate** is celebrated on the floor of Presbytery.

Congratulations! You are now a Candidate for ordained ministry in the PC(USA).

### Phase 3: Candidate to Certified Ready (To Receive a Call)

1. **CPM** continues to hold Annual Consultations with Candidate (including those Certified Ready) (G-2.0605).
2. The **Candidate** must seek approval and **permission from the CPM** (if time frame of G-2.0602 is satisfied), to take the **Senior Ordination Examinations**. Information about all Ordination Exams, including the schedule, descriptions, registrations, and Exam Handbook are available on the PC(USA) site.
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)
4. The **Candidate** meets with CPM 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).
5. If approved, the Candidate may request permission to circulate Personal Information Form (PIF) and enter into negotiation for service. **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 their seminary degree.

6. **CPM reports to Shenango Presbytery** the Candidate is Certified Ready to receive a call.

Congratulations! You are now Certified Ready to receive a call.

#### **Phase 4: Certified Ready to Ordained**

1. The **Candidate** circulates their PIF
2. The **Candidate** receives a call from a church or validated ministry and informs CPM.
3. **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).
4. *"The presbytery placing the call to the candidate for ministry shall ordinarily examine, ordain, and install the candidate."* (G-2.0702)
5. If the ordination is conducted by Shenango Presbytery, and the presbytery is fully-satisfied the Candidate is suited, fit, and ready for ordination, after examination on the floor of Presbytery, the vote shall be to proceed with their ordination.
6. The **Candidate** submits to CPM the [Planning the Commission for Your Ordination Service form](#) for CPM approval at least one week prior to the CPM meeting.
7. If the ordination is conducted by Shenango Presbytery, **a Commission** ordains the Candidate and **submits a report** to the Stated Clerk of Shenango Presbytery.

**Rejoice! The Presbyterian Church (USA) has a newly ordained pastor. Praise be to God!**