

FOURTH and FINAL DRAFT

Proposal for the Training of Commissioned Ruling Elders

Committee on Preparation for Missional Ministry

New Castle Presbytery

October 2018

New Castle Presbytery designates its Committee on Preparation for Missional Ministry (CPMM) as the supervisory committee in the preparation of a Ruling Elder to be commissioned for service.

REQUIREMENTS: A Commissioned Ruling Elder is an ordained elder who completes the required training to serve a congregation or validated ministry in the capacity of a pastor. An elder who completes the required training to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) may be commissioned by New Castle Presbytery at the recommendation of the Committee on Ministers and Congregations (COMC). An elder previously commissioned in another presbytery shall give evidence of meeting New Castle Presbytery's requirements. New Castle Presbytery may commission a trained CRE for a period of time not to exceed 3 years. The commission can be renewed after evaluation by COMC. A CRE's home church may or may not be the place of service.

Parts or all of the CRE training program are widely applicable to leadership positions at all levels of the church. New Castle Presbytery encourages ruling elders to avail themselves of education for their own edification and to equip themselves to be more effective in their leadership in the church.

TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THOSE SEEKING TO BE COMMISSIONED

- A. The Ruling Elder seeking a Commission in New Castle Presbytery shall come to the CPMM and ask to be enrolled as a *CRE Nominee*.
 - The Ruling Elder shall make application to CPMM to be enrolled (form provided).
 - The Ruling Elder shall provide an endorsement from the Session of his/her church or from another presbytery (form provided).
 - The Ruling Elder will be interviewed by CPMM or its designees.
 - A criminal background check will occur within 6 to 8 weeks after applying to be enrolled as a *CRE Nominee*.
 - A psychological evaluation shall occur within 3-6 months of being accepted as a *CRE Nominee*. Cost for the psychological evaluation shall be shared between CPMM, home church, and the Ruling Elder.
 - The Ruling Elder shall complete a Healthy Boundaries course in the presbytery within two years of enrollment.
- B. CPMM will provide a liaison for the *CRE Nominee*. The liaison will be a mentor to the *CRE Nominee* as he/she proceeds through the training. The *CRE Nominee* shall be in touch with the liaison on a regular basis and attend meetings of the CPMM as requested, at least annually.
- C. The educational component of the training is to complete the Core Courses for Commissioned Ruling Elders at one of our PCUSA seminaries. Currently there are two seminaries that offer online courses for a CRE (see Note 1).

Proposal for CRE Training (Draft 4, October 11, 2018)

The Core Courses shall include:

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Reformed Theology
- Reformed Worship and Sacraments
- Preaching
- Presbyterian Polity
- Christian Education
- Pastoral Care
- Mission and Evangelism

The *CRE Nominee* shall also complete a CPMM-approved experiential program for Clinical Pastoral Education.

- D. The CPMM desires to walk with the *CRE Nominee* throughout the training, through the CPMM liaison and at meetings of the full committee. Topics of mutual interest include:
- Educational courses including evaluative comments from the seminary
 - Spiritual development
 - Interpersonal relations as it relates to pastoral responsibilities
 - Personal growth
 - Professional development
 - Opportunity for peer support as a *CRE Nominee*, provided there is more than one person in the process at the same time.
 - Opportunity for a Practicum that will be supervised in a church.
- E. The home session or presbytery of the *CRE Nominee* shall maintain a supportive relationship with the nominee throughout the training period; this could include financial assistance beyond the one-third cost of the psychological evaluation. The home session or presbytery is encouraged to name someone to be in touch with the *CRE Nominee* throughout his/her preparation for a commission.
- F. CPMM will certify the *CRE Nominee's* suitability for service as a CRE based on at least the following criteria:
- The ability to articulate an understanding of Christian vocation as it relates to his/her desire to serve in this capacity.
 - Ability to express his/her personal faith in a way that demonstrates an understanding of the Reformed tradition.
 - Ability to express his/her understanding of the interrelationship between God and humanity.
 - Ability to describe what it means to be a Presbyterian in a church or validated ministry.
 - Ability to describe how his/her personal and cultural background relates to being a CRE and how that background fits into our nation's increasing multicultural character.
 - Ability to communicate the tasks of a CRE and his/her gifts for the tasks.

EXAMINATION. Along with a written statement of faith, the *CRE Nominee* will be asked to answer in writing directed questions on Reformed Theology, Sacraments, Worship, and Scripture.

- G. Once certified ready for service as a Commissioned Ruling Elder, the Committee on Ministers and Congregations (COMC) of New Castle Presbytery may recommend to New Castle Presbytery a particular commission for the nominee. Potential commissioning could be to solo ministry with a smaller congregation, to serve on the staff of a larger congregation, to serve as a new church development pastor, or to serve in any validated ministry.

NOTE 1

PC(USA) SEMINARY COURSES (2018)

Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA offers five-week online courses. “Those seeking to become Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs) take four Foundational Courses in the first year and five Practical Courses in the second year.”

<https://www.upsem.edu/leadership-institute/pathways-learning-leadership-2/>

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary offers 12 week online courses in its Christian Leadership Program. “CRE students may register for courses by contacting the Seminary Distance Education Coordinator’s office at 563.589.3630.” Ruling elders interested in pursuing commissioning will likely be encouraged by CPM to receive their education from the Dubuque Theological Seminary.

<http://udts.dbq.edu/academics/educationforlaity/>

New Castle Presbytery encourages all ruling elders to avail themselves of education for their own edification and to equip themselves to be more effective in their leadership in the church.