

# **Guidelines for the Committee on Ministry For Commissioning Lay Pastors**

## **Accountability and Relationships Between CPLM, COM, CM&N, CDC Draft 3**

The **Committee on Ministry** alone is empowered to make recommendations to presbytery for a Lay Pastor to be appointed to serve a congregation. Any request for a Commissioned Lay Pastor – whether it is from a council of Presbytery or a congregation in the Presbytery – must go through COM.

A congregation may request of COM a Commissioned Lay Pastor. After receiving a request, COM will make a determination (using its list of Certified Lay Pastors) as to whether to commission, whom to commission, and specific terms and pastoral functions allowed. A Commissioned Lay Pastor will not, however, be assigned to a congregation without the Session's consent. Agreement and cooperation with a requesting congregation's Session will be sought.

CPLM is responsible for the preparation process and for ongoing support of both Commissioned Lay Pastors and Certified Lay Pastors and their continuing education. At the end of the preparation process, CPLM will certify the Lay Pastor Candidate and forward his/her certification file to COM for its consideration. COM may direct CPLM to oversee additional training for a Commissioned Lay Pastor if there is a need for it.

The Committee on Developing Congregations (CDC) and the Council on Ministry and Nurture (CM&N), in the course of their work, may recommend to COM from time to time the use of Commissioned Lay Pastors in churches with which they are working. Upon receipt of such a request, COM will make a determination (using its list of Certified Lay Pastors) as to whether to commission, whom to commission, to which church, and with specific terms and pastoral functions.

Individual certified Lay Pastors may not initiate a request that the COM place him/her in a particular congregation. Requests for service must initiate from either the Session of the church, the CDC, or the CM&N. Certified Lay Pastor candidates may request of the Executive Presbyter's office to be placed on the Pulpit Supply List.

### **Functions of a Commissioned Lay Pastor**

The Committee on Ministry shall determine on a case by case basis which forms of ministry a Lay Pastor may perform. These forms of ministry shall include the following two types of work:

## I. Primary Pastoral Functions

Administer the Sacrament of Baptism (G-14.0562)

Administer the Lord's Supper (G-14.0562)

Have a voice and vote in Presbytery meetings (such vote shall be counted as that of an elder Commissioner for purposes of clarity) (G-14.0562)

Perform a service of Christian Marriage when invited by the Session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state. (G-14.0562) (New York State does permit non-ordained persons functioning in a role like that of CLP to register with the Office of the City Clerk by presenting appropriate credentials and completing a Form CC2000D.)

Leading in Worship (G-14.0562)

Teaching the Scriptures

Preaching the Word (G-14.0562)

## II. Supportive Pastoral Functions

Spiritual Consolation

Congregational Care and Visitation

Music Ministry

Administration (but not including the role of Moderator of Session)

Such other non-sacramental or worship related tasks as in the determination of the COM may be included in this category.

Commissioned Lay Pastors may not be appointed to fulfill the following ministerial functions:

Moderate Session

Engage in diagnostic, therapeutic, or extended counseling ministry, except when the Lay Pastor has received certified qualification from an appropriate professional licensing body which oversees clinical counseling practice.

CLP's are not authorized to wear a clergy collar and are not to be addressed as "Reverend."

## **When the Services of a Lay Pastor are Requested**

When a congregation requests the services of a certified LP, or upon request for service from a Commissioned Lay Pastor which comes from the CDC or CM&N, the Committee on Ministry shall determine that the Presbytery's strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and after examining the certified Lay Pastor, and/or any additional instruction deemed necessary by the CPLM or COM has been provided, the COM may recommend to the presbytery that a Commissioned Lay Pastor perform specific functions the CLP shall be authorized to fulfill.

All candidates for Commissioned Lay Pastor shall be examined by the COM as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching (G-14.0560). If the services requested by the Session or appropriate committee are limited to those functions in Section II: Supportive Pastoral Functions, the COM, having fulfilled (G-14.0562) to consult with the appropriate committees and the Session of the church, and having examined the candidate; the COM may recommend that the presbytery proceed to the examination and commissioning of the Lay Pastor.

When the functions of a CLP include any or all of Section I: Primary Pastoral Functions, and the COM is considering the appointment of a Lay Pastor to a congregational assignment, the COM shall require a psychological assessment. The cost of such evaluation shall be shared by the presbytery (2/3), and the candidate (1/3). The Lay Pastor must assign permission for the reporting of all findings in the Psychological Assessment to the Chairs of COM, CPLM, and the Presbytery Executive. These three (the Chair of COM, CPLM, and Presbytery Executive) shall then confer and make a recommendation to the COM as to whether to proceed to the placement of the Lay Pastor. The recommendation to proceed with placement on the basis of the psychological assessment must be unanimous.

The COM shall make individual determinations regarding the length of the term of service it shall recommend to the Presbytery for each CLP. Such recommendations may be for one, two, or three years. These terms may be renewed at expiration, or terminated at any time at the discretion of the presbytery. (G-14.0561)

“A review of the work of the CLP shall be conducted annually. Presbytery shall revoke the commission of any lay pastor who does not abide by these provisions or whose work is evaluated as not adequate to meet the needs of the particular congregation or the presbytery.” (G-14.0561)

## **Ongoing Relationship to the COM**

The COM shall assign to each Commissioned Lay Pastor both a supervisor (ordinarily Moderator of Session of the church served) and a mentor (Minister of Word and Sacrament.)

The COM will oversee and regularly evaluate the relationship between Commissioned Lay Pastor and the church he/she serves (with input from the supervisor and mentor).

COM considers and recommends reappointments when appropriate.

The CPLM shall provide semi-annual in-service training events to provide for the continuing education and vocational growth of the CLP's. Attendance at no less than one of these events annually is mandatory. Mentors and supervisors may be invited to participate in these events as appropriate.

A commission may be valid for a period of up to three years, as determined by Presbytery; it may be renewed at expiration, or terminated at any time through recommendation of the presbytery.