

THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK CITY

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR LAY MINISTRY

PROPOSAL
for a
LAY PASTOR PROCESS

HANDBOOK
for
LAY PASTORS

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WWW.PCUSA.ORG

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Dear Presbyters:

As Presbyterians, we believe **we are-- all of us -- called to service** and that it is not necessary to ordain or commission persons in order to validate their sense of call.

BALANCING TRADITION WITH NEED

In the life of any living institution, though, there comes a time when it may become necessary, with regard to certain of its functions, to find a balance between valued and honored traditions come to us from the past with the very real needs of the here and now.

General Assembly of 1993 had such a balance in mind when it amended the Book of Order to establish a role of the Commissioned Lay Pastor in the Presbyterian Church and specify a process for the Lay Pastor's preparation (G-14.0560, see appendix).

COMMISSIONED MINISTRY

"In the life of the Christian community God calls people to particular acts of discipleship to use their personal gifts for service in the Church and in the world. These specific acts may be strengthened and confirmed by formal recognition and commissioning in worship."

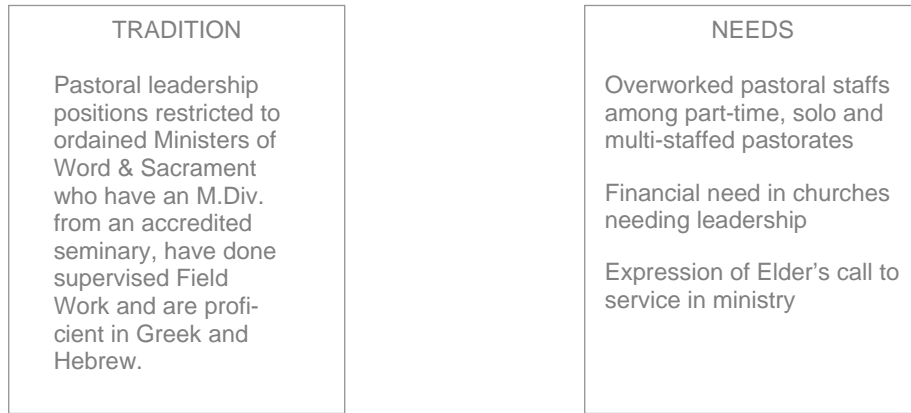
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ENOUGH MINISTRY FOR EVERYONE

There is no more demanding job than ministry: church members (as well as un-churched seekers) require considerable pastoral time and contact; the needs of congregations for proclamation of the gospel, meaningful worship, leadership and for pastoral care are increasingly pressing; and the mission needs of our neighborhoods and city are growing and changing and seem impossible to meet adequately.

Congregations with two or more pastors, those served by **solo pastors**, and particularly **part-time pastors**, might welcome sharing some of the work with a trained, supervised and mentored Commissioned Lay Pastor colleague.

In **immigrant fellowships**, in which language, culture, and varying Presbyterian traditions (from countries of origin) are considerations, a Commissioned Lay Pastor may be the ideal person to lead pastorally.



MEETING A FINANCIAL NEED

In the Presbytery of New York City calls to Ministers of Word and Sacrament must be half time or greater; as a consequence, and with yearly rising salary minimums, some churches are increasingly unable to afford pastoral minimums.

Calls to ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament in New York City must be half time or greater.

These churches and other struggling congregations in our Presbytery who want and need pastoral leadership will be well served by carefully placed and appropriately trained and supervised Commissioned Lay Pastors.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ELDERS

In addition being useful in all kinds of congregations, the Lay Pastor role is a means for Elders who experience a call to extend their ministries as Elders in this organized, special “lay” way.

The Strategic Plan charges CPLM with providing Presbytery with regular opportunities for continuing education for laypersons. The committee’s hope is that available Lay Pastor courses will help serve that end – some participants will go on to become Certified Lay Pastors, while others will take the courses for their own pleasure and education.

A Commissioned Lay Pastor, in most situations, may serve a congregation while continuing to maintain a secular career.

PERCEPTIONS

In the Presbytery of New York City, a Lay Pastor process is not exclusively about serving churches perceived to be “small” or “struggling.” It is perhaps inevitable that some Lay Pastors will be commissioned to small or struggling churches who want them, but we strongly affirm that **Commissioned Lay Pastors should and will serve in a wide range of ministries in all kinds of churches whether they be small, struggling, or “avenue.”** Commissioned Lay Pastors might serve as “solos” in a few churches, but more usually we expect they will serve in partnership with installed part-time and/or full-time Pastors and Moderators of Session.

Our further intention is that Lay Pastor courses in our area will be designed and promoted to interest any Presbyterian New Yorker who seeks a deeper understanding of the Bible and Reformed theology, church history, worship leadership and pastoral care.

MANY HAVE ALREADY FINISHED THE COURSES

The guidelines and process described in this document assume a Lay Pastor Candidate is new to the process and will start from the beginning. There are, however, Elders who completed Lay Pastor requirements, except certification, years ago and are waiting for certification to make them available for possible commissioning. It is CPLM's intent and priority – once the process is approved by Presbytery – to meet and become acquainted with these Elders in order, if the way is clear, to move them expeditiously toward certification.

WHAT DOES "CERTIFIED" MEAN?

"Certified" describes a Lay Pastor Candidate who has satisfied all the requirements for commissioning as Lay Pastor but has not been commissioned.

OBSERVATIONS FROM SALT LAKE CITY

At a PC(USA) conference in Utah in 2007, at which COM and CPM topics were presented, there was a presentation on Lay Pastors -- an opportunity for representatives from nearly 30 different presbyteries to compare notes, share experiences, and offer ideas and strategies.

Some observations from that conversation:

- The Book of Order does not require presbyteries to use Commissioned Lay Pastors. A presbytery decides on its own whether or not to use it will train and commission Lay Pastors.

- The Book of Order requires specific courses of preparatory education for, and individual supervision of, Commissioned Lay Pastors, but it provides only the outer boundaries of a Lay Pastor’s role and the functions he or she may perform. It is up to a Presbytery that wants to use Lay Pastors to establish its own organic guidelines, tailored to its unique ethos, situation, and mission strategy.
- The Preparation for Lay Ministry process involves evaluating a Candidate’s sense of call, providing support and continuing education, as well as meeting Lay Pastors regularly, reference-checking, oversight and record keeping.
- Presbyteries require psychological exams and background checks before certifying because Commissioned Lay Pastors will often relate to persons in vulnerable life situations. Similarly, CPLMs request immigration documentation, when applicable.
- A commission at the end of preparation is not guaranteed, even if educational requirements are met and the Committee on Preparation for Lay Ministry (CPLM) “certifies” the Lay Pastor Candidate. It is COM only that makes recommendations

When it commissions, Presbytery will assign to a CLP a Minister of Word and Sacrament as mentor and supervisor (*G-14.05064*). Since Commissioned Lay Pastors are asked to function without benefit of a full theological education they benefit from Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have the added education and experience. Likewise, Commissioned Lay Pastors are often knowledgeable about the history and culture of a congregation and its neighborhood and are able to share wisdom with the ordained Minister with whom they work. Such a situation should be viewed as an opportunity for exciting ministry and working together as a team.

to Presbytery for a commission. It will keep a current list of ready-to-be-commissioned Certified Lay Pastors.

- It is not reasonable at this time to expect full time employment as a CLP.
- A Commissioned Lay Pastor is accountable to the Presbytery through the minister Moderator of the Session (G-14.0564) so Moderators of Session will be chosen who will work with the Commissioned Lay Pastor in supportive way. Moreover,

Today there are approximately 700
Commissioned
Lay Pastors in the PC(USA).

potential for burnout is great and Lay Pastors, especially those who maintain secular employment, and colleagues who supervise them, will be sensitive to this.

- Commissions are not portable from one Presbytery to another (though some presbyteries have agreed to share training and commissioning to serve across a boundary). In New York City's case, a Commissioned Lay Pastor commissioned by another Presbytery may be eligible for commissioning in New York City only after joining a church in the Presbytery of New York City, being endorsed by that Session, meeting with CPLM, and making records and transcripts available for evaluation by CPLM. If the way is clear, he/she will be certified and his/her NYC certification will be forwarded to COM.

- Many Presbyteries' Lay Pastor programs require Interim training.

- Presbyteries have seen some instances of improper use among CLPs of the title "Reverend" and wearing a clerical collar. Since a Commissioned Lay Pastor is an Elder such practices are inappropriate.

There are now a few commissions being explored and readied for COM, waiting only for a process to be approved and supported by Presbytery.

- Some Commissioned Lay Pastors may be able financially to serve as volunteers but others may be paid in a way commensurate with time and effort expended in service they provide. Expenses (telephone, travel, etc.) may be reimbursed. A recommendation from COM to Presbytery for a commission will include terms of compensation, if any.

These times call for a creative and thoughtful balance between our traditions and the needs of our congregations. It is the Committee's hope that the Presbytery of New York City will not only approve this Lay Pastor process but that it will also enthusiastically affirm it.

The Committee on Preparation for Lay Ministry (07-08)

Elder David Michel, Chair
Elder Norman Bumgardner
Elder Jacky Radifera
Elder Joyce Seebrooks
The Rev. Cathy Stilwell
The Rev. Perry Wootten
Elder David Richardson, staff

ACTS OF DISCIPLESHIP, GIFTS FOR SERVICE

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Book of Order of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) identifies a role in the Presbyterian Church for the Commissioned Lay Pastor (G-14.0560) and specifies a process for a Lay Pastor's preparation and deployment. A person considering Lay Ministry and any Session sponsoring and supporting such a person should be familiar with this passage in the Book of Order (excerpt in appendix).

A Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) is a member of the PC(USA) and an ordained PC(USA) **Elder who is trained, commissioned and supervised by the Presbytery** to provide pastoral services to a particular church or churches.

Lay Ministry is an extension of the office of Elder, an ordained office of the church, because it expands possibilities for ministry to Elders who have a sense of call and seek training.

It also expands the possibilities for ministry in all churches: to supplement pastoral staffs in churches with installed Pastors as well as those, which for some reason (financial, geographical, language, etc.), do not seek the services of an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament.

According the Standing Rules of the Presbytery of New York City, the Lay Pastor Process is under the supervision of the **Committee on Preparation for Lay Ministry (CPLM)** of the Presbytery of New York City. CPLM is an agent of all parties in the Lay Pastor preparation process: the Lay Pastor Candidate, the sponsoring Session, the Session served, and the Presbytery. Its role is encourager, administrator, evaluator and gate-keeper

The process is open to any Elder desiring to become Commissioned Lay Pastors; its purpose is to assist him/her develop and improve leadership skills for work in the local church.

II. LAY PASTOR PROCESS – A CHART

▼ PASTOR & HOME SESSION

■ Prospective Lay Pastor Candidate completes application form, meets with Pastor, requests endorsement of home Session.

This Lay Pastor process is modeled on the Preparation for Ministry process.

■ Home Session forwards signed endorsement and application forms to CPLM.

■ Candidate is scheduled for upcoming CPLM meeting; is asked to provide:

Official college transcripts or copy of HS diploma
Lay Pastor course transcripts (if already a LP student)
Proof of immigration status, when applicable.

▼ CPLM

■ CPLM interviews prospective Candidate with questions about faith, personal history, sense of call, and hopes for lay ministry.

■ Lay Pastor Candidate is enrolled (reported to Presbytery), if way is clear, and is assigned a CPLM Liaison; process is reviewed, expectations discussed:

7 courses to be passed
A semester of supervised Lay Pastor field work in a PC(USA) church
Statement of Faith (begun at start of process, completed by end of process)
Background check and psychological assessment (in later stage of process)
No guarantee of commission at end of process.

■ Candidate enrolls in Lay Pastor courses, meets regularly with CPLM Liaison and at least twice a year with CPLM.

■ Lay Pastor Candidate begins to write **Statement of Faith**: a “work in progress” to be reviewed and discussed at Candidate’s meetings with CPLM.

— more —

THE LAY PASTOR PROCESS – A CHART (cont' d)

- When courses, fieldwork, and Statement of Faith are completed, CPLM examines Lay Pastor Candidate for certification – an **oral examination** (essay questions available ahead of time); CPLM also considers Candidate's progress and discernment, background check and psychological assessment. Candidate will **preach sermon** for CPLM.
- If CPLM approves, Lay Pastor Candidate is **certified** (i.e., ready to be added to COM's list of available Lay Pastor Candidates).
- CPLM forwards certification and Statement of Faith to COM, includes inventory of skills, interests, experience, and types of service desired.

▼ COM

- Certified Lay Pastors are placed on “available-for-commissioning” list, which COM uses when it recommends to Presbytery the commissioning of a Lay Pastor to a particular church.
- COM considers and recommends commissions on a case-by-case basis, according to the needs of the Presbytery.
- When COM considers recommending a commission to Presbytery it will interview and examine the Lay Pastor it is considering, and specify in its written recommendation to Presbytery what pastoral functions he/she may (and may not) perform. Commissioned Lay Pastors may conduct the Lord's Supper only when approved by Presbytery and invited by Session.
- COM assigns to each Commissioned Lay Pastor both a supervisor (ordinarily Moderator of Session of church served) and a mentor (a Minister of Word and Sacrament).
- COM oversees and regularly evaluates relationship between Commissioned Lay Pastor and the church he/she serves (with input from supervisor and mentor).
- COM considers and recommends reappointments when 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 at the discretion of Presbytery through recommendation by COM.
- CPLM continues to offer Commissioned Lay Pastors support and opportunities for continuing education.

III. THE COMMITTEE: CPLM

CPLM ensures ongoing, accessible and transparent process for the preparation of a Lay Pastor; it meets regularly with Lay Pastor Candidates to provide support and participate in the Lay Pastor Candidate's discernment; it maintains pastoral relationships with Lay Pastors who are commissioned by Presbytery.

CPLM has modeled this proposed process on the Preparation for (Ordained) Ministry process. The requirements are different but the processes of preparation are very much alike.

CPLM does not commission Lay Pastors. CPLM forwards to Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM) the certification of an Elder who has satisfactorily completed the Lay Pastor preparation process. It is COM's purview alone to recommend to Presbytery the commissioning of a Lay Pastor — to a specific place, for a specific term, with a specific role (job description).

In producing this handbook CPLM expresses its intent to 1) make clear its understanding of its obligations, 2) explain and spell out the preparation requirements and process, 3) help persons in the Lay Pastor Program understand what is and will be expected of them, and 4) recommend guidelines to Presbytery.

IV . EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The Book of Order says a **Lay Pastor Candidate must successfully complete seven course requirements** (see box). In addition, the Presbytery of New York City requires **completion of a Field Work Internship**.

Elders enrolled in the process may complete the required courses at any school or seminary approved by Presbytery (currently, the Lay Pastor programs at Auburn and Princeton seminaries).

Lay Pastor courses are offered in the evenings and/or weekends and ordinarily involve approximately 30 hours over 10 weeks in total classroom time. Courses are Pass/Fail, and some course instructors may provide written evaluations.

THE REQUIRED COURSES

- 1) Bible
- 2) Reformed Theology and Sacraments
- 3) Presbyterian Polity
- 4) Preaching
- 5) Leading worship
- 6) Pastoral care
- 7) Teaching (G14.0801)

The Presbytery of New York City also requires completion of a Field Work Internship course.

If a Lay Pastor Candidate passes one course a semester he/she will complete the educational requirements in three years; however, requirements may be completed as quickly as the Lay Pastor Candidate desires.

V. ENTERING THE PROCESS (STEP 1)

An Elder desiring to become a Lay Pastor Candidate in the Presbytery of New York City will first need endorsement from his/her home Session.

If Session endorses the Elder it will submit to CPLM, along with a brief application form, an endorsement form, signed by the Moderator and Clerk of Session. Endorsements will be submitted to the CPLM on a continuing basis and applications will be reviewed and/or approved during regularly stated meetings of the committee.

At the Lay Pastor Candidate's first meeting with the committee, CPLM will

- review application and endorsement forms,
- become acquainted and explore personal faith,
- discuss Lay Pastor Candidate's sense of call and areas of interest, experience and hope for service
- request transcripts from prior education and proof of immigrations status, if necessary.
- explain the process, educational requirements and choices for courses at various seminaries,
- assign a member of CPLM as Liaison to the Lay Pastor Candidate
- make appointment to see Lay Pastor Candidate again in 6 or 12 months

Once approved, the Elder's name will be added to the rolls of Candidates for Lay Pastor and he/she proceeds to starting the required courses necessary for certification. Documentation of course completion and evaluations ware to be submitted to CPLM for its files.

CPLM may recommend or suggest additional courses based on the strategy of the Presbytery.

VI. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION (STEP 2)

■ COURSE WORK:

Successful completion of seven Lay Pastor Courses and Field Work.

■ STATEMENT OF FAITH:

During the course of preparation, CPLM will ask each candidate to write a one-page Statement of Faith. It will be a work in progress throughout a candidate's progress and, after certification, the finished Statement of Faith will become part of the candidate's certification file. When it is considered a commission, COM may (or may not) examine a candidate on his/her Statement of Faith. Similarly, Presbytery may (or may not) examine a candidate on his/her Statement of Faith prior to approving a commission.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

7 courses and Field Education

Statement of Faith and CPLM oral exam

Documents (transcripts, psych exam, background check, signature on Sexual Misconduct Policy)

■ EXAMINATION:

Upon completion of the necessary courses, the Candidate will be examined by CPLM to assess his/her understanding of the role and responsibilities of Commissioned Lay Pastor. The committee will use a selection of questions created and suggested for Lay Pastor examinations, found at PC(USA)'s Lay Ministry website (see box).

ORAL EXAMINATIONS FOR LAY PASTOR CERTIFICATION

Candidates will have access to all the questions that may be asked in an examination though CPLM will use only a selected few, and will change the selection with each examination.

The questions:
www.pcusa.org/clp/assessment

■ **DOCUMENTS:**

Prior to certification, CPLM will request immigration documentation, if applicable. Since Commissioned Lay Pastors will relate to persons in vulnerable life situations, Presbytery may require a psychological exam and/or background checks before certification. Candidates will be required to sign the Presbytery's sexual misconduct policy.

VII. CERTIFICATION (STEP 3)

When a candidate has successfully completed the core requirements, the Statement of Faith, and the examination, and has satisfied the CPLM with regard to his/her expression of the faith and the discernment of a call to Lay Ministry, CPLM will *certify* the candidate and forward his/her certification to COM with an inventory of the candidate's skills, interest, experience, and areas of interest as they relate to Lay Ministry.

WHAT DOES "CERTIFIED" MEAN?

"Certified" is the word used to describe a Lay Pastor Candidate who has satisfied all the requirements for commissioning as a Lay Pastor but has not yet been commissioned.

"Certification" is a document (or documents) that verify for COM a Lay Pastor Candidate's successful completion of the educational requirements and, in addition, has satisfied CPLM's requirements. Certification will include the Lay Pastor Candidate's forms, Statement of Faith, information about his/her secular education, skills (language or other), interests, and hopes for Lay Ministry.

VIII. WHAT HAPPENS AT COM

COM considers and recommends commissions on a case-by-case basis, according to the needs of the Presbytery. A commission is recommended when COM feels it is appropriate and/or when a church requests a Lay Pastor Commission and COM concurs.

Certified Lay Pastors candidates will be placed on an “Available-For-Commissioning” list, which the Committee on Ministry (COM) will consider when it recommends to Presbytery a commission to a particular church.

A commission at the end of preparation is not guaranteed even if educational requirements are met and the Committee on Preparation for Lay Ministry (CPLM) “certifies” the Lay Pastor Candidate.

It is not reasonable at this time to expect full time employment as a CLP.

When COM considers recommending a commission to Presbytery it will interview and examine the Lay Pastor it is considering (exam will include questions on Statement of Faith), and specify in its written recommendation to Presbytery what pastoral functions he/she may (and may not) perform. Commissioned Lay Pastors may conduct the Lord’s Supper only when approved by Presbytery and invited by Session.

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

COM oversees and regularly evaluates relationship between Commissioned Lay Pastor and the church he/she serves (with input from supervisor and mentor).

COM considers and recommends reappointments when 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 at the discretion of Presbytery through recommendation by COM.

SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING ...

... will take place when (or soon after) a commission is approved by Presbytery; the location of the service is usually the Church of Service.

Certified Lay Pastor candidates may request of the Executive Presbyter's office to be placed on the Pulpit Supply List.

CPLM continues to offer Commissioned Lay Pastors support and opportunities for continuing education.

IX. FUNCTIONS OF A COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR

According to the Book of Order (G-14.0562), a Commissioned Lay Pastor may be authorized with Presbytery approval to perform all or some of the following functions in addition to servings as worship leader and preaching the gospel:

- administer the Lord's Supper
- the sacrament of Baptism
- moderate Session of the congregation under the supervision of and when invited by the Moderator of Session appointed by Presbytery
- have a voice and vote in meetings of Presbytery (such vote will be counted as an Elder Commissioner for purposes of clarity)
- perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the Session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state.

When COM considers a commission, it will determine, on a case-by-case basis, which of the above functions the Lay Pastor being recommended for a commission may perform. Such functions will be specified in its commission recommendation to Presbytery. Accordingly, Commissioned Lay Pastors may be allowed to conduct the Lord's Supper only when approved by Presbytery and invited by the Session.

Authorizations are not automatic and may be granted to some Commissioned Lay Pastors in a Presbytery and not to others, based on COM's assessment of the ministry context. COM's recommendation to commission will be a **written covenant** specifying terms and expectations relative to the Commissioned Lay Pastor, the congregation served, and Presbytery. For clarity's sake, COM's Lay Pastor covenants -- besides specifying what functions shall be performed -- may also list those functions that are not to be performed by the Lay Pastor in his/her commission.

A commission shall be valid for a period of up to three years, as determined by the Presbytery. It may be renewed at expiration or termination at any time at the discretion of the Presbytery through recommendation by COM.

NO TWO COMMISSIONS ALIKE;
EACH UNIQUE

COM will "tailor-make" each commission, specific to the church of service: context, job description, terms, and any other pertinent considerations COM deems appropriate.

Authorizations are not automatic; some functions may be granted to some Commissioned Lay Pastors in a Presbytery and not to others, based on COM's assessment.

COM will not approve commissions "on behalf of Presbytery" during the summer months.

X. SUPERVISION

A Commissioned Lay Pastor will be under the supervision of the Presbytery through the Moderator of the church being served (G-14.0516) with Annual Evaluation review by CPLM and COM.

Presbytery, through CPLM, shall regularly provide resources for a layperson's spiritual and intellectual development. An annual report from CPLM will be in the call packet for

each annual meeting of Presbytery; its purpose is to inform Presbytery of the committee's efforts and results.

If compensation is available, terms shall be established by written agreement between the CLP, the Session of the church(es) served, and COM. Terms shall depend on workload, time involved, travel necessary, and volunteer considerations. There are as yet no limits of requirements for remuneration.

For compensation and tax implications see discussion at www.pcusa.org/clp.

XI. EVALUATION AND REAPPOINTMENT

Evaluations of Commissioned Lay Pastors shall be conducted by the Session of the church to which the Commissioned Lay Pastor is commissioned as well as the mentor and/or supervisor. The committee anticipates that the following guidelines will be used:

One Year: quarterly reports with an Annual Evaluation form

Two Year: semi-annual reports with an Annual Evaluation form

Three Year: semi-annual reports with an Annual Evaluation form

Evaluations and recommendations for reappointment will be submitted to both COM and CPLM, though it is COM who makes renewal or termination recommendations.

CPLM will create and make available for distribution though the Presbytery all endorsement, application, and evaluation forms.

XII. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CPLM, COM, CM&N, CDC

COM alone is empowered to make recommendations to Presbytery for a commission. 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 such a request, COM will make a deliberation (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 forced onto any congregation. 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 and 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 they are working with. Upon receipt of such a request, COM will make a deliberation (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.

XIII. LAY PASTORS FROM OTHER PRESBYTERIES

The Committee on Developing Congregations (CDC, which is under CM&N) has, with CPLM's assistance and COM's approval, determined a process for deploying and commissioning Lay Pastors to serve especially (but not only) in immigrant or developing fellowships. CPLM will follow the process described in CDC's document for any Lay Pastor Candidates from other Presbyteries seeking a commission in New York City. At minimum, however, a Lay Pastor seeking a commission in New York City must join a Presbytery of New York City congregation and obtain that Session's endorsement. After receiving Session's endorsement, CPLM will follow steps 1, 3, 4 and 5 found on CDC's document (appendix), which are in accord with CPLM's policies described in this document.

XVI. SEMINARIES AND COURSES

Successful completion of Lay Pastor Courses offered at the following seminaries will satisfy requirement for that course. Each seminary has different costs, schedules, rotations, emphases, etc.

AUBURN SEMINARY'S NEW YORK INSTITUTE FOR LAITY

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Presbytery may eventually approve Lay Pastor programs at New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Dubuque Seminary (online), and New York Theological Seminary. See www.pcusa.org/seminaries for Lay Pastor courses offered in other areas of the country.

XV. COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR LAY MINISTRY (CPLM)

CPLM is organized to conform to how the Committee understands and fulfills its responsibilities.

The Chair

The Chair schedules, prepares the agenda for, and moderates all meetings of the Committee. In the event of absence, the Chair may designate another member of the Committee to moderate the meeting. The Chair is responsible for all official correspondence between CPLM and other Committees of Presbytery (COM, CM&N and CDC), Lay Pastor Candidates and Sessions endorsing them.

Associate Executive Presbyter for CPLM

The Associate Executive maintains a filed record for each person in preparation for lay ministry and is responsible for the files' maintenance, security and integrity.

CPLM Liaison

A Lay Pastor Candidate, while he or she is in preparation, will be assigned a Liaison from CPLM. The CPLM Liaison is responsible for regular personal contact with the Lay Pastor Candidate during his or her preparation to provide support and counsel.

Some things need to be believed to be seen.

APPENDIX 1. – CDC DOCUMENT

Policy for Commissioning Lay Pastors to serve Developing Congregations in the Presbytery of New York City

In its Principles for Welcoming International/Multicultural Faith Communities, adopted by the Presbytery of NYC on 11/21/2000, we said, “The Presbytery will be open to creating new ways of doing ministry” ...including “support designs for ministry that will be an effective response to the needs of the people and their circumstances.”

List of Abbreviations used in this document:

PNYC	Presbytery of New York City
CDC	Committee on Developing Congregations
COM	Committee on Ministry
CPLM	Committee on Preparation for Lay Ministry
CM&N	Council on Ministry and Nurture

I. Calling a Lay Pastor to a Developing Congregation in the PNYC:

G-14.0801c: “When a Presbytery, in consultation with the Session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and after additional instruction deemed necessary by the Presbytery has been provided, a Presbytery may authorize a commissioned Lay Pastor.....”

In accordance with G-14.0801c, whenever a Session or governing body makes inquiry about creating the position of Lay Pastor within a Developing Congregation¹ in the Presbytery of New York City (PNYC), the inquiry will be referred to the Committee on Developing Congregations (CDC). After consulting with the Committee on Ministry (COM) and the Session or governing body² involved, the CDC may recommend to the Council on Ministry and Nurture (CM&N) that the position be created.

Generally speaking, a Lay Pastor may be needed in an immigrant congregation that has a potential for vitality in ministry and demonstrates a cultural, theological & linguistic affinity with the Lay Pastor candidate, but where resources are too limited to support an otherwise suitable Minister of Word and Sacrament.

II. Training and Examination for a Lay Pastor candidate called to a Developing Congregation in the PNYC:

If CM&N concurs with the CDC's recommendation to create the position of Lay Pastor in a Developing Congregation, the Session or governing body shall extend a request for service to a particular Lay Pastor candidate. If the Lay Pastor candidate is previously ordained and a member in good standing of a church in the PNYC or an affiliated Developing Congregation, the CDC shall refer such candidate to the Committee on Preparation for Lay Ministry (CPLM) for training and examination (as required by G-14.0801). When the CPLM determines that the Lay Pastor candidate is certified ready to be commissioned, it shall recommend the candidate to COM for review and approval of the commission. Oversight passes to the CDC with COM approval.

III. Review of Previous Training and Examination for a Lay Pastor previously commissioned by another Presbytery & called to a Developing Congregation in the PNYC

If the Lay Pastor candidate has previously been commissioned in another Presbytery, the CPLM will use the following criteria in determining the Lay Pastor candidate “certified ready to be commissioned” in the PNYC:

- 1) The Lay Pastor candidate shall become a member of an established congregation in the PNYC.
- 2) The Lay Pastor candidate shall be endorsed by the CDC as a suitable candidate to serve a particular Developing Congregation in the PNYC.
- 3) The CPLM shall obtain and review documentation of commissioning and service from the previous Presbytery as well as evaluations and an endorsement of the Lay Pastor candidate.
- 4) The CPLM shall check the Lay Pastor candidate’s references.
- 5) The Lay Pastor candidate shall provide evidence (i.e. transcripts, certificates) of successful completion of Lay Pastor training at an academic institution or through a previous Presbytery’s CLP training program. The CPLM of the PNYC may be guided by the judgment of the previous Presbytery in determining the adequacy of a previously commissioned Lay Pastor candidate’s training.

If the CPLM determines that additional training is required, (for example, if the previous Presbytery’s training differs in length or scope from those of the PNYC,) the CPLM will inform the Lay Pastor candidate in writing as soon as possible, but after no more than 60 days, specifying the subject matter and scope of such training, in accordance with G-14.0801.

- 6) The individual shall be examined by the CPLM on personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and areas of instruction covered in his/her training. Upon successful completion of the examination, the Lay Pastor candidate shall be considered certified ready to be commissioned, and the CPLM shall recommend the candidate to COM for review of the commission.

IV. Review of Commission & Deployment of a Lay Pastor to a Developing Congregation in the PNYC

Review of the Commission: When a candidate has been certified ready to be commissioned, COM will review the commission, and specify the functions (G-14.0801c) that the Lay Pastor will be authorized to perform. COM will refer the review of the terms of compensation to the CDC. The CDC will determine the adequacy of the terms of compensation, guided by its understanding of the history, resources, and mission potential of the particular Developing Congregation, and the acceptability of such terms to the candidate. The CDC will report its determination to CM&N, and upon approval by CM&N, to COM at its next stated meeting³. At this point, CPLM and COM will present the Lay Pastor candidate to the Presbytery for approval and commissioning.

Deployment and Commissioning: The CPLM and COM will present the Lay Pastor candidate to the Presbytery at the next stated meeting for approval and commissioning. COM will assign a Minister of Word and Sacrament to serve as mentor and supervisor of the Commissioned Lay Pastor. COM will conduct an annual review of the Commissioned Lay Pastor jointly with the CDC. The Commission will be valid for up to three years, unless otherwise specified by COM, and may be renewed or terminated by the COM in consultation with the CDC according to the stipulations of G-14.0801c. The CDC will provide ongoing supervision of both the Commissioned Lay Pastor and the Developing Congregation, consulting regularly with the COM mentor.

~Approved by CDC on 1-10-07, CM&N on 1-25-07, COM on 4-17-07, and CPLM on 5-7-07.

Notes

¹A Developing Congregation in the PNYC is defined as a faith community of new immigrants that has been received by the PNYC as a “Worshiping Community,” a “Fellowship,” or a “New Church Development,” operating under the guidance & with the support of PNYC’s Committee on Developing Congregations.

²The term governing body in this document refers to a Developing Congregation’s administrative committee or governing board, which is not a Session *per se*, but which fulfils many of the functions of a Session.

³Compensation for pastors of Developing Congregations in the PNYC varies widely and—with the exception of NCDs ready to be chartered—does not meet Presbytery minimum salary requirements, and does not include participation in the Pension Plan. The CDC is familiar with the funding history and patterns of each of the Developing Congregations in the PNYC, and is therefore a logical entity to evaluate the adequacy of compensation of a Lay Pastor in a Developing Congregation.

APPENDIX 2. 2007 – 2009 BOOK OF ORDER EXCERPT

G-14.0560

Commissioned Lay Pastor

The commissioned lay pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service. This commission is valid only in one or more congregations, new church development, or other validated ministries of the presbytery designated by the presbytery. Such an elder is selected by and receives training approved by the presbytery. The elder shall be instructed in Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching. The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously. An elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in a particular congregation may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a commissioned lay pastor again until appointed to a particular congregation by the presbytery.

G-14.0561
Period Valid

The commission shall be valid for a period up to three years as determined by the presbytery. It may be renewed at expiration or terminated at any time at the discretion of the presbytery. Presbytery shall regularly provide resources for the person’s spiritual and intellectual development. A review of the work of the commissioned lay pastor 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.

—more—

G-14.0562
Authorization to
Perform Functions

When a presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and after additional instruction deemed necessary by the presbytery has been provided, a presbytery may authorize a commissioned lay pastor to perform any or all of the following functions described in a.– e. below.

- a. Administer the Lord’s Supper.
- b. Administer the Sacrament of Baptism.
- c. Moderate the session of the congregation under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery, or when appointed by presbytery as moderator.
- d. Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state.
- e. Have a voice and vote in meetings of the presbytery (such vote to be counted as an elder commissioner for purposes of parity).

G-14.0563
Pastoral Care and
Confidentiality

Those serving as commissioned lay pastors shall be bound by the same standards of trust and confidentiality as ministers of the Word and Sacrament (**G-6.0204**).

G-14.0564
Supervision

The commissioned lay pastor shall work under the supervision of the presbytery through the moderator of the session of the church being served or through the committee on ministry. A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

G-14.0565
Questions Asked

When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of an applicant, it shall ask the applicant the constitutional questions in **W-4.4003**, using these words for Question i: Will you be a faithful commissioned lay pastor, serving the people by proclaiming the good news, teaching faith and caring for the people, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?