

Guidelines and Criteria for Applicant Lay Pastors

Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Language

Applicant Lay Pastor - a person who is admitted into a lay pastor academy and is actively participating in the preparation process.

Eligible Lay Pastor - a person who has completed all requirements for commissioning and is waiting for a call.

Commissioned Lay Pastor - a person who is called and commissioned to work within the bounds of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa on a one year, renewable basis.

Oversight

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) of North Central Iowa Presbytery will provide oversight for Applicants for Lay Pastor. The CPM will process all applications from persons desiring to seek commissioning as a lay pastor.

- I. The CPM will meet with each applicant prior to admission.
- II. The CPM will select/approve a mentor for each Applicant Lay Pastor.
 - A. The Mentor shall not be the applicant's pastor.
 - B. The Mentor must be an Ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA.
 - C. The Mentor may be from outside North Central Iowa Presbytery.
- III. The CPM will assign a committee member to be a liaison with the Applicant Lay Pastor and Mentor.
- IV. The CPM will meet with each Applicant Lay Pastor at least once during his or her training.
- V. The CPM will meet with each Applicant Lay Pastor prior to commissioning to affirm his or her readiness.

Admission

The Applicant Lay Pastor will be a member in good standing of the PCUSA for two years with faithful, regular, participation in worship and the life of the church prior to admission.

- I. The Applicant Lay Pastor will have a written recommendation from his or her pastor.
- II. The Applicant Lay Pastor will have two additional written recommendations from non-family persons who can attest to the applicant's faith journey and sense of call.
- III. The Applicant Lay Pastor will complete an application to include statements on:
 - A. Sense of call;
 - B. Personal faith;
 - C. What it means to be a Presbyterian; and
 - D. What gifts and skills do you bring to the lay pastorate which reflect the reformed tradition.
- IV. The Applicant Lay Pastor will obtain his or her Session's approval
- V. The Applicant Lay Pastor will meet with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
- VI. The Applicant will come before Presbytery during a liturgy/service to affirm his or her desire to enter into this process and abide by the guidelines set forth by this Presbytery.

Course of Study

- I. The Applicant Lay Pastor will satisfactorily complete the course of study outlined in the Lay Pastor Academy by the Presbytery of North Central Iowa.
- II. If an Applicant for Lay Pastor has completed documented course work or has extensive experience, the applicant may request an equivalency for all or part of the Lay Pastor Academy. The following equivalencies will be considered.
 - A. Certified Lay Preacher Training (PCUSA)
 - B. Seminary courses for which credit was received with satisfactory performance (e.g. pass/satisfactory, grade greater than C)
 - C. All other requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The burden of proof will be the responsibility of the Applicant Lay Pastor.
- III. If the Applicant Lay Pastor should miss part of the Lay Pastor Academy, the following options are available:
 - A. The Applicant Lay Pastor can wait for the next cycle of the Lay Academy and complete the course at that time.
 - B. The Applicant Lay Pastor can take a seminary course for credit and pass the course at a satisfactory level.
 - C. The Applicant Lay Pastor can attend Synod School or some other form of training with prior approval of the CPM. Documentation of attendance and participation will be required.
 - D. The Applicant Lay Pastor can arrange for a mentor to provide the training with prior approval of the CPM. Documentation will be required.
- IV. Applicants for Lay Pastor will meet with the CPM at the end of the first year and prior the beginning of the second year of training.
- V. Applicants for Lay Pastor will participate in a individual/group session sponsored by CPM to evaluate psychological and leadership issues associated with pastoral roles.

Criteria for Commissioning

- I. Eligible Lay Pastors will have completed the Lay Pastor Academy or approved equivalencies.
- II. Eligible Lay Pastors will have completed 2 years as an Applicant Lay Pastor. Waivers of this criteria may be given to persons who completed Lay Preacher training prior to enrolling in the Lay Pastor Academy.
- III. Eligible Lay Pastors will be an ordained Elder in the PCUSA.
- IV. Eligible Lay Pastors will have completed a minimum of 2 years college course work.
- V. Eligible Lay Pastors will meet with the CPM for the purpose of a final theological and readiness examination. Prior to this meeting the Applicant Lay Pastor will write/preach a sermon and provide a one-page Statement of Faith.
- VI. Eligible Lay Pastors will affirm the nine constitutional questions as outlined in the Book of Order for ordination.
- VII. Committee on Ministry will meet with Eligible Lay Pastors to determine an appropriate call for Commissioning.

(The Committee on Preparation for Ministry has authority to make exceptions to these rules)