

# Student Guide to the Ordination Process

## In The Presbytery of Los Ranchos

Welcome to the ordination process in the Presbytery of Los Ranchos. We recommend that you keep a folder with a record of all your interactions with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), and keep this there. Also, you may find updated copies of this guide on the web at [www.losranchos.org](http://www.losranchos.org). Please don't be intimidated by the length of this document; it's all information you will be glad you have someday. We have tried to answer every question you may have about the process for preparation for ordination in the Presbytery of Los Ranchos. At the end of this guide, you will find a glossary and a list of additional resources.

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## *Overview of the Ordination Process*

The ordination process begins with the Inquiry phase then proceeds to the Candidacy phase and through to being certified ready for examination for ordination, pending receipt of a call, taking a minimum of two years before ordination (*Book of Order* G-2.0602). Under extraordinary circumstances, that time period may be reduced by an affirmative action of three-fourths of the Presbytery to no less than one year (G-2.0602), but it would be highly unusual for the Presbytery of Los Ranchos to grant such an exception. On average, a person under care will work with the CPM for around four years before either being ordained or deciding against ordained ministry.

### **Timeline**

This is a recommended timeline for a fulltime student; don't feel overwhelmed by this timeline. Part-time students should adjust the timeline according to their academic progress. Your CPM liaison will help you to stay on track. God has God's own timing. It is more important to follow God's leading than to adhere to a particular schedule.

### **Beginning the process** (Usually prior to starting seminary):

- Talk to your Pastor and Session about beginning the Inquiry process.
- Complete Forms 1 and meet with your Session, **with a member of CPM present**.
- Do the vocational assessment with the professional designated by CPM.
- Meet with the CPM for approval to begin the Inquiry process.

### **First year under care:**

- Pursue seminary studies. Appendix 4
- Take the Bible Content Exam (given twice a year). Appendix 5
- Explore internship options. Appendix 6
- Have your first annual consultation with your CPM liaison.

### **Second year under care:**

- If you feel you are ready, apply to move to Candidacy.
- Continue seminary studies.
- Complete internship approved by CPM. Appendix 6
- Explore Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) options. Appendix 6
- Have your annual consultation with your CPM liaison.

### **Third year under care:**

- Complete CPE approved by CPM. Appendices 6 and 7
- Take ordination exams. Appendix 5
- After passing your ordination examinations, during your last school term, meet with the CPM for final assessment. Appendix 8
- After successful completion of final assessment, submit your PIF to CPM for approval to circulate.
- Have your third annual consultation with your CPM liaison.
- Complete your M. Div.

### **After the third year:**

- Continue to circulate your PIF.
- Interview with Pastoral Nominating Committees.

- Annually, meet with your CPM liaison for an annual consultation.
- Receive a call.
- Be examined for ordination by the Presbytery.

**Summary**

What student does	What CPM does
<b>Applicant</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active member of PCUSA church at least 6 months</li> <li>• Meets with Pastor and then with Session to consider call to ministry.(Forms 1)</li> <li>• If Session endorses, takes vocational assessment.</li> <li>• Meets with CPM for approval to become Inquirer</li> <li>• Sets goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sends <i>representative</i> to Session</li> <li>• Interviews student</li> <li>• Assigns CPM liaison</li> </ul>
<b>Inquirer</b> Period of exploration of call to Ministry of Word and Sacrament G-2.0603	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminary studies for MDiv</li> <li>• Exam: PCUSA Bible Content Exam</li> <li>• Annual appt w/ CPM liaison (Forms 3 &amp; 4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison initiates annual appt and brings report to CPM for approval</li> </ul>
<b>Candidate</b> Period of affirmation of call to Ministry of Word and Sacrament G-2.0604	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When student &amp; CPM liaison agree ready:</li> <li>• Write up 6 questions (Form 5)</li> <li>• Meet with liaison, then Session for approval to continue</li> <li>• Meet with CPM for approval to continue</li> <li>• Questioned by Presbytery for approval to continue</li> <li>• Become Candidate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison meets with Inquirer</li> <li>• Sends rep. to meet with Session</li> <li>• Interviews student</li> <li>• Helps question student at Presbytery</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue seminary with all required courses <b>for grade</b></li> <li>• Church internship</li> <li>• Annual appointments w/ CPM liaison</li> <li>• After 2 years seminary, PCUSA ordination exams</li> <li>• Retake ordination exams until passed</li> <li>• CPE internship</li> <li>• Graduate with MDiv</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison checks files for transcripts &amp; required courses</li> <li>• Pre-approves church internship</li> <li>• Liaison initiates annual appt and brings report to CPM for approval</li> <li>• Gives pre-permission for ordination exams</li> <li>• Pre-approves CPE internship</li> </ul>
<b>Final Assessment</b> G-2.0607 Certification of readiness for examination for ordination pending a call to Ministry of Word and Sacrament	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write statement of faith, exegesis, sermon</li> <li>• Meet with CPM: preach and be questioned</li> <li>• If approved, is considered “Certified Ready” for examination pending a call</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison checks file for fulfillment of all requirements</li> <li>• Interviews student; reads exegesis; hears sermon</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May circulate PIF (pre-approved by CPM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-approves PIF before circulation</li> <li>• Liaison continues to meet annually</li> </ul>
<b>Receives a Call</b> G-2.0607	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads statement of faith for Presbytery &amp; is questioned there</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents Candidate at Presbytery for questioning</li> </ul>

### *Some Useful Things to Know about the Ordination Process:*

1. Your M.Div. must be completed at a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the committee. (G-2-0607c)
2. It is important that you keep the Presbytery's Stated Clerk's Office up to date on your contact information, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail. We may have important information for you concerning the ordination process, or even potential grant money, but if we can't contact you in a prompt fashion, such information may not find you in time to benefit you. Be sure to respond within 24 hours to emails, calls or any communication from this office or from your CPM liaison.
3. The CPM usually meets the second Thursday of every month. Paperwork is due back into the Stated Clerk's office by noon the Thursday two weeks prior to the meeting to which the paperwork pertains, except for final assessment materials which must be submitted seven weeks prior to your final assessment appointment.
4. At any time, the CPM may impose supplemental requirements on any one under care of the CPM, including additional coursework, classes, supervised independent study, tutoring, personal counseling or spiritual direction.

### *General Help*

#### 1. Financial Aid

You may apply for financial aid as soon as you are officially an Inquirer. The CPM has limited funds to distribute each year for financial aid. Financial aid applications may be obtained from your liaison or by contacting the Stated Clerk's Office; they are due July 1. Aid awards, which are based on need, are considered and awarded once a year at the CPM's September meeting. Information about other sources of financial aid may be obtained from your seminary, from CPM and on the PC(USA) website.

Tips for filling out your financial aid application:

- If you have special circumstances, like a wedding coming up or a child in college, don't be hesitant to note that on the application.
- Be specific about the amount of debt that you have, credit card debt counts.
- Be reasonable about your expenses. Excessively large estimates of expenses may make you appear casual with your resources.

#### 2. Travel Expenses

If you incur unusual travel expenses to meet with the committee, you may be reimbursed by the Presbytery. Keep any receipts and submit those with a completed expense report to the Stated Clerk's office. Note that the committee has the right to decline to reimburse expenses that it considers excessive.

#### 3. Annual Consultations.

About a year after you are enrolled as an Inquirer, you will have your first annual consultation. You should have an annual consultation every year you are under care of the CPM. This is a meeting with your CPM liaison and one other member of CPM. Your Session liaison may also be invited to be present. Annual consultations are usually

conducted in person, but may be conducted by telephone if circumstances make an in-person meeting impractical.

Your CPM liaison will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time and date about four weeks before the annual consultation is due. If you have not heard from your CPM liaison three weeks before your annual consultation due date or if there is a particular time that is going to be most convenient for you, feel free to contact your CPM liaison yourself.

Your CPM liaison will supply you with a copy of Form 3 to be completed and returned prior to the scheduled date of your annual consultation. Copies are also available on line at the Presbytery website.

After your annual consultation meeting, your CPM liaison will complete Form 4 and send you a copy for your approval and signature. After you return the signed copy to your CPM liaison, it will be submitted to CPM for approval and forwarded to both your Session and your seminary, if you are still enrolled in seminary.

## *Guide to Becoming an Inquirer*

The Inquiry period is a time for you and the church to explore whether God is calling you to ordained ministry. It is wise to begin the Inquiry process as early as possible, even before starting seminary.

### **There are many steps to becoming an Inquirer: (G-2.0603)**

#### 1. Meeting with your Pastor:

- The first step in exploring your call to ordained ministry is to discuss the matter with your Pastor and to let the Session of your church know of your interest.
- You need to have been an active member of your PC(USA) congregation for at least six months before you are eligible to become an Inquirer.

#### 2. Forms:

- The next step is to contact the Stated Clerk's Office to obtain a copy of Form 1 and to let the Presbytery know of your interest. You will want to make a tentative appointment for your first meeting with CPM at this time.
- After you complete Form 1, provide the Clerk of your Session with a completed copy so that he or she can distribute it to the members of Session prior to your meeting with them.

#### 3. Session meeting:

- You will need to speak with your Pastor or Clerk of Session to set up a meeting with your Session. Notify the Stated Clerk's Office of the date and time of the Session meeting as soon as possible because a representative of CPM must attend the Session meeting.
- At the Session meeting, the elders will discuss your sense of call with you and may ask you questions about your Form 1. Then, they will ask you to leave the meeting while they discuss whether to endorse you to Presbytery.
- After they have voted to endorse you, then they will assign you a Session liaison. You should keep this person apprised of your progress throughout the process.

- The CPM representative will explain to you and your Session the Los Ranchos “Policy Regarding Authoritative Interpretation” and will ask you to sign that you have read it. Please see Appendix 9.
4. After the Session meeting:  
Check with the Clerk of your Session to make sure she or he will forward the signed Form 1 to the Stated Clerk’s Office. This advises CPM that your Session has decided to endorse you and tells CPM who your Session liaison is. You are responsible for getting your completed Form 1 and college transcript(s) to the Stated Clerk’s office before your first meeting with the CPM. The deadline for submitting materials is noon on the Wednesday two weeks prior to the Wednesday that you are scheduled to meet with the CPM. CPM may postpone your appointment if you do not turn in all of the required paperwork on time.
  5. Vocational Assessment:  
Once Session has voted to endorse you, you will be given the name of the psychologist who conducts the vocational assessments for the Presbytery. It is your responsibility to contact the psychologist and make the necessary appointments to complete the vocational assessment. You should ask the psychologist when the report will be available so that you can schedule your meeting with CPM after they have received a copy of this report.
  6. Inquirer’s Interview with CPM
    - After you have completed the vocational assessment, you will come to CPM for an “Inquirer’s interview.” Contact your Pastor or Session liaison to accompany you to this meeting. At this time we will discuss the vocational assessment and any questions raised by it. Then CPM will ask you to leave the meeting while it discusses whether to enroll you as an Inquirer. After the vote, CPM will invite you to return to the meeting and will inform you of its decision.
    - CPM Liaison: If you are to be enrolled as an Inquirer, then CPM will assign you a liaison. This person will be your primary point of contact with CPM throughout the process. Bring any questions or concerns you have about the process, your call or life in general to him or her. You and your CPM liaison will also complete Form 2B and return it to CPM as soon as reasonable.
  7. Seminary  
If you have not already done so, you will need to select a seminary. CPM encourages those under care to attend a Presbyterian seminary, but attendance at other seminaries may be approved. Remember that your choice of seminaries must be approved by CPM even if you have begun—or even completed—your studies before you come under care.
  8. Academic Requirements  
You will find in Appendix 4 of this document the requirements for seminary classes, internships and ordination exams.

## *Guide to the Inquiry Phase*

The Inquiry phase may last only a short time, or it may continue for years. This is influenced by one's personal readiness to move on to Candidacy, as well as the practical pressures of seminary ending and needing to find a call.

The purpose of the Inquiry phase is to determine with your Session and with the CPM whether or not God is calling you to ministry of the Word and Sacrament. There is no rush to leave the Inquiry phase, but remaining there too long could delay the ordination process later on.

If you are already in the process of getting a Master of Divinity degree (M. Div.), moving on to Candidacy in a year is probably appropriate. About a year after you are enrolled as an Inquirer, you will have your first annual consultation. This meeting with your CPM liaison should help you to decide whether you are ready to apply to move to Candidacy. If you decide that you are not yet ready to move to Candidacy, you may remain an Inquirer until you are confident God is calling you to ordained ministry.

## *Guide to Becoming a Candidate*

When you, the CPM and your Session feel you are ready, you may seek Candidate status. Although there is no set amount of time you must spend as an Inquirer before seeking Candidate status, the CPM usually waits at least twelve months before allowing Inquirers to apply for Candidacy.

The purpose of the Candidacy phase is to further prepare you to become a Minister of the Word and Sacrament. (G-2-0604)

It is wise to move into the Candidacy phase prior to your third year of seminary. It is important to begin the Candidacy phase more than a year before your graduation date so that you will be free to accept a call as soon as you find one. You may not be ordained less than a year after you begin your Candidacy phase, no matter how long you have been an Inquirer, unless approved by a three-fourths vote of the Presbytery. (G-2.0602)

Also, although there is no specific amount of time set in the *Book of Order*, the CPM is unlikely to meet with you for the purpose of final assessment less than six months after you have been enrolled as a Candidate. Thus, waiting too long to become a Candidate can delay your being certified ready for examination for ordination, pending receipt of a call, which could delay your search for a call.

### **There are several steps to take in order to enter the Candidacy phase: (G-2.0605)**

This process involves 4 meetings: with your CPM liaison, your Session, the CPM, and the Presbytery. For most people, it takes several months. Allow plenty of lead time.

1. Paperwork and meeting with CPM liaison  
Usually one year after your first appointment with CPM and after at least 8 months as an Inquirer.

- Complete PCUSA Form 5 (A, B, D)<sup>1</sup> including response to 6 questions, minimum 3 pages, maximum 7 pages, must be typed) and send a copy to your CPM liaison.
- Meet with your CPM liaison to discuss your answers to 5A and your progress as an Inquirer. If possible, bring your Session liaison and/or your Pastor to this appointment. Determine together whether your progress to this point affirms a call to ordination to Ministry of Word and Sacrament and whether this is the time for you to move from Inquirer to Candidate status.
- Your liaison will write a summary of that consultation, including a recommendation with reasons to support, delay, or deny your proceeding to Candidacy. (Form 4)

Reminder: Answer these 6 questions carefully; your responses will be presented during the appointment with CPM. With CPM, you will choose which two responses to share with Presbytery.

## 2. Session meeting

- Contact the Office of the Stated Clerk to schedule an appointment with CPM for after you meet with your Session; there can be a several-month wait for this appointment.
- Consult with your Pastor and CPM liaison to arrange mutually convenient date for meeting with your Session to evaluate with them whether you are ready to become a Candidate. At least one CPM member must attend the meeting with Session.
- Provide copies of Form 5 with answers to 6 required questions for each member of Session before this meeting.
- At Session meeting, you will be examined by the Session using the answers to these 6 questions and other questions they may ask you. The discussion will focus on your sense of call and the responses to the questions that you provided. Then, they will ask you to leave the meeting while they discuss whether to endorse to Presbytery your move to Candidacy. After they have voted, they will invite you to return to the meeting and tell you their decision.
- If your Session endorses your move to Candidacy, then the Clerk of Session will mail page 2 of Form 5 to the Stated Clerk's office.

## 3. Meeting with CPM:

- After meeting with your Session and securing their endorsement, you are ready to meet with the CPM to begin the Candidacy phase of the process. If you have not yet scheduled an appointment with CPM, contact Stated Clerk's Office to schedule an appointment. The deadline for submitting to CPM your answers to Form 5 is noon on the Wednesday two weeks prior to the Thursday that you are scheduled to meet with the CPM. CPM may postpone your appointment if you do not turn in all of the required paperwork on time.
- If possible, bring your Session liaison and/or your Pastor to this appointment.

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<sup>1</sup> Form 5 can be obtained from the Presbytery office, contact the Office of the Stated Clerk for a hard copy or fillable form.

- At your meeting with CPM, you will be asked about your academic progress, your internship experiences, if any, your sense of call and your responses to the six questions listed on Form 5. Then CPM will ask you to leave the meeting while it discusses whether to recommend to Presbytery your move to Candidacy. After the vote, CPM will invite you to return to the meeting and will inform you of its decision.
  - If CPM has decided to recommend that Presbytery move you to Candidacy, then it will help you to select responses to two of the questions to be supplied to the members of Presbytery. Note that the response to question #2 is never one of the responses supplied to Presbytery.
4. Presbytery meeting:
- Be sure to invite your Pastor and Session liaison to accompany you to the Presbytery meeting. You might want to invite your family and friends also.
  - At the meeting, you may be asked briefly to describe your faith journey and your sense of call. Members of Presbytery will then ask questions concerning what you have said and the responses to the two questions they have received. They are allowed to ask you also about your Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry. Expect a few questions.
  - After the questioning is completed, you will be asked to leave briefly, while the members of Presbytery discuss and vote on the CPM recommendation that you be moved to Candidacy. After they vote, you will be invited to return to the meeting and the result will be announced to you. You will then be asked to respond to the following questions from the CPM Advisory Handbook:
    - (1) Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament?
    - (2) Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?
    - (3) Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?
    - (4) Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a candidate for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?
  - Your family, friends, and church members will be invited to join you in front of the Presbytery while the Presbytery prays for you.
5. Meet again with your CPM liaison to prepare goals for next 12 months, Form 5B.

### *Guide to Being Certified Ready for Examination for Ordination, Pending Receipt of a Call*

You must meet with CPM for Final Assessment before you can be Certified Ready for Examination for Ordination Pending Receipt of a Call (G-2.0607). It is a good idea for your Session liaison and/or Pastor to accompany you to this meeting with CPM.

Until you have met the requirements of G-2.0607a-d, you may not circulate your Personal Information Form (PIF) or otherwise enter into negotiation with a church concerning ordained ministry.

For Final Assessment you must submit

- an exegesis paper
- the full manuscript of a sermon that directly reflects the work done in your exegesis paper
- a one page statement of faith, in your own words.

At the meeting with CPM you will be asked to preach your sermon (15 min.) and answer questions about your statement of faith. All papers for Final Assessment must be received by the Stated Clerk's Office seven weeks before your appointment with CPM. See Appendix 8 for detailed information regarding the papers required for Final Assessment.

Assuming you pass Final Assessment, this will be the last time you will be required to meet with the full committee. However, you continue under the care of the CPM until you are ordained. If this has not occurred within a year after Final Assessment, then your liaison will contact you for an annual. Of course if you want guidance from CPM or your liaison, you may always contact your liaison or the Stated Clerk's Office.

**In order to be CERTIFIED READY TO RECEIVE A CALL, you must:**

1. Pass all five ordination exams or their equivalent set by the Presbytery.
2. Satisfactorily complete the required courses at a theological institution approved by the CPM.
3. Complete one unit of CPE approved by CPM.
4. Complete one internship approved by CPM.
5. Graduate from seminary or present a plan to complete a seminary degree. A complete transcript from your seminary is required showing all courses attempted and final grades. All courses required by CPM must have been taken for a letter grade.
6. Have an annual consultation for that year on file at the Stated Clerk's office.
7. Successfully complete Final Assessment at the CPM meeting.

### *Guide to Finding a Call*

1. Once you have completed Final Assessment, you will need CPM to approve circulation of your Personal Information Form (PIF). You may submit it at your meeting for Final Assessment, or through your liaison after that date. CPM may make suggestions for changes before it approves submission of your PIF to Church Leadership Connection (CLC).
2. After you submit your PIF online, you may edit it only three times in a year, so be very careful that you are happy with your PIF before submitting it. This PIF is the primary way a church has to decide whether or not to contact you.
3. Don't feel you have to wait for churches to contact you. This is especially true when your PIF first begins to circulate, as it is only given to Pastor Nominating Committees (PNC) with which the computer matches you and in the geographic regions you selected. In other words, most of the churches looking for a pastor when you start looking for a church won't see your PIF until they are done with the PIFs they're already looking though and request more.

Therefore, it's a good idea to browse through Church Information Forms (CIFs) of churches that are in the geographic region you selected when you submitted your PIF. When you find a church you are interested in, you can contact its PNC directly by sending an email copy of your PIF (email contact information is in the CIF).

To send a copy of your PIF, bring it up in your web browser, go to file, save as and save it as an html document, "*Your name's* PIF." Email this file as an attachment. Directly linking to your PIF will not work, as the CLC uses a secure web protocol and no one without a password may see your PIF from its link.

4. It is a good idea to keep communications open with churches that contact you, even if you may not initially have an interest in them. You never know when you will hit it off with the people, and it's good to have practice interviewing, both for you and the PNC.
5. It may take a while to find a church to which you feel called, so start early. Also, once you find a call, starting may be delayed by months because you must be examined for ordination before the Presbytery, which may only meet a few times a year. It is also important to note that because of the computer system the PC(USA) uses, it may be a couple of weeks before CLC allows your PIF to circulate, even after you have been Certified Ready.
6. Once you have found a call, usually you will be examined for ordination in the Presbytery calling you and ordained in the Presbytery of care, *i.e.* the Presbytery of Los Ranchos (G-2.0702). The process is different in each Presbytery, but you will have to answer questions before the Presbytery that examines you and may be asked to preach.

You may want to invite family and friends to accompany you that day. If you are examined in our Presbytery, your family, friends, and church members will be invited to join you in front of the Presbytery while the Presbytery prays for you.

## Appendices

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## Appendix 1: Glossary

- **Bible Content Exam:** One of the five ordination examinations. Given separately each February, this exam is a one hundred question multiple choice test encompassing the entire Bible. A score of 70 is passing.
- **Book of Order:** Part of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. This book covers polity, worship, discipline, and other rules of the church. Among other matters, it governs how Presbyterian bodies work and how the labor of the church is divided between them.
- **Candidate:** A Candidate is someone who has a sense that God is definitely calling them to ordained ministry, and is moving actively in that direction. One must be a Candidate for at least a year before being ordained.
- **Certified Ready for Examination for Ordination, pending receipt of a Call** (“Certified Ready”): At this stage in the ordination process, the Candidate is fully endorsed by the CPM and has completed all requirements for ordination, save receiving and accepting a call. You must be Certified Ready in order to circulate your PIF or enter into negotiations with a church concerning ministerial services.
- **Church Information Form (CIF):** The ecclesial counterpart to the PIF, the CIF is a standardized form that all churches seeking an ordained minister must complete.
- **Church Leadership Connection (CLC):** The website which ordained ministers and those Certified Ready use to find churches and vice versa.
- **Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE):** Experience-based theological education that combines the practice of pastoral care with qualified supervision and peer group reflection. One unit equals 400 hours.
- **Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM):** A committee elected by the Presbytery whose task is to prepare those called by God into the ministry for their positions in the church. Functionally, this entails guiding seminary students through the ordination process of the PC(USA) and providing spiritual and, if needed, financial support.
- **Final Assessment:** The meeting with CPM at which CPM decides whether to certify you ready for ordination pending receipt of a call. All papers for Final Assessment must be received in the Stated Clerk’s office seven weeks prior to your appointment with CPM. See Appendix 8 of this document for detailed information regarding the papers required for Final Assessment.
- **Inquirer:** An Inquirer is one who is trying to discern whether or not they are called to ordained ministry in the PC(USA). The Inquiry phase is designed to allow the church and anyone who thinks that God may be calling him or her into ordained ministry to explore that call to determine whether this is indeed what God desires for him or her. The Inquiry phase normally lasts at least a year, but may be shorter.
- **Master of Divinity (M. Div.):** This is a three year seminary degree most commonly pursued by students interested in pursuing ordained ministry.
- **Ordination Exams (Ords):** A set of five exams required for ordination in the PC(USA), including the Bible Content exam, usually taken during the first year of theological education,

and examinations in Bible Exegesis, Theological Competence, Worship and Sacraments, and Church Polity, usually taken after two years of theological education. These exams are graded on a national level by PC(USA) pastors and elders. A Candidate must pass all five exams in order to be ordained.

- **Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC):** A committee formed in a church without a pastor or associate pastor for the purpose of calling a pastor or associate pastor.
- **Personal Information Form (PIF):** A standardized application for all PC(USA) Minister of the Word and Sacrament positions disseminated nationally online as well as through local presbyteries.
- **Under Care:** After you meet with the CPM, and are officially enrolled as an Inquirer, you begin a covenant relationship with the Presbytery and the CPM. This relationship lasts until you are released from it either by exiting the ordination process by choice or by a decision of the Presbytery, or by accepting a call and being ordained. This language reflects the nurturing aspect of the relationship between the CPM and the Inquirer or Candidate.

## Appendix 2: Contact Information

### *Contact Info:*

If you have any questions about the ordination process that aren't answered here, or if you'd like to talk about exploring your call, feel free to contact your liaison or the Moderator of CPM anytime. If you need to set up an appointment with the CPM for any reason, contact the Stated Clerk's Office or the CPM secretary.

CPM Moderator:

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*c/o* Presbytery of Los Ranchos  
P O Box 910  
Anaheim CA 92815-0910

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Presbytery Stated Clerk:  
Rev. Sandra Kim  
Presbytery of Los Ranchos  
P.O. Box 910  
Anaheim, CA 92815-0910  
[statedclerk@losranchos.org](mailto:statedclerk@losranchos.org)  
(714) 956-3691 ext. 132 (office)  
(714) 956-1940 (FAX)

Executive Assistant to the Stated Clerk and to CPM:  
RE Carol Bridgeman  
Presbytery of Los Ranchos  
P.O. Box 910  
Anaheim, CA 92815-0910  
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(714) 956-3691 ext. 125 (office)  
(714) 956-1940 (FAX)

## Appendix 3: Online and Print Resources

### Resources:

*Ministry Loves Company: A Survival Guide for Pastors* by John T. Galloway, Jr. and John M. Buchanan

*Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* by Parker J. Palmer

### Online resources

- Presbytery of Los Ranchos website [www.losranchos.org/resources](http://www.losranchos.org/resources). Click on Resources then scroll down to “Committee on Preparation for Ministry.”
- PC(USA) Home Page – [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)
- PC(USA) Preparation for Ministry – [www.pcusa.org/prep4min](http://www.pcusa.org/prep4min)
- PC(USA) Preparation for Ministry Forms – Request all forms from the Presbytery office – 714/956-3691 ext. 125 or [eortez@losranchos.org](mailto:eortez@losranchos.org)
- PC(USA) Bible Content and Ordination Exams – [www.pcusa.org/exams](http://www.pcusa.org/exams)
- PC(USA) Church Leadership Connection (PIF Forms) – <http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/clc/call-seekers/>
- The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) – <http://www.acpe.edu>
- Downloadable and searchable versions of the *Book of Order* and the *Book of Confessions* are available online. Follow the link under “Helpful Links” in the Resources page of our website, [www.losranchos.org](http://www.losranchos.org)
- Find out more about PC(USA) scholarships for seminary at <http://www.pcusa.org/financialaid/programfinder/theological.htm>

## Appendix 4: Academic Requirements

1. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is willing to assist each Inquirer/Candidate in designing a course of study suited to the needs of that person. Such course of study may include experiences that will give the Inquirer/Candidate adequate knowledge of Presbyterian polity and Reformed theology, as well as exposure to other theological traditions. Each presbytery sets requirements in addition to those listed in *Book of Order*.
  
2. Los Ranchos Inquirers/Candidates will pass, with **letter grade**, seminary courses in:
  - a. Biblical Studies: 1 academic year<sup>2</sup> in each testament.
    - i.e. OT: Overview, Pentateuch, Prophets, Writings.
    - NT: Gospels, Act-Rev., Pauline/Johannine Epistles.
  - b. Biblical Theology: 1 course (3 sem/4 qtr units)
    - i.e. NT theology, OT theology, Hermeneutics<sup>3</sup>
  - c. Systematic/Historical Theology: Academic year<sup>4</sup>
  - d. Ethics: 1 course (3 sem/4 qtr units)
  - e. Greek: Academic year<sup>5</sup> to include exegetical work in the language.
  - f. Hebrew: Academic year<sup>6</sup> to include exegetical work in the language.
  - g. Church History: Academic year<sup>7</sup>

Must include early church history, Reformation and Presbyterian history
  - h. Reformed Worship and the Sacraments: 1 course
  - i. Pastoral Theology/Pastoral Care & Counseling: 1 course
  - j. Homiletics and preaching at least 4 sermons with evaluation: 2 courses minimum
  - k. Presbyterian polity
  - l. Presbyterian history May be covered by other courses. Course syllabus required to establish that class meets criteria. See Appendix 7 for how to seek this permission from CPM.
  - m. Reformed Confessions/Creeds - May be covered by other courses. Course syllabus required to establish that class meets criteria. See Appendix 7 for how to seek this permission from CPM.
  - n. Christian Education/Spiritual Formation: 1 course
  - Unless any one of the above required courses is given for pass/fail only, it **shall be taken for a letter grade**.
  - Permission may be granted by CPM to take electives pass/fail.
  - **Alternate courses** must be approved by the CPM before they are taken.
  - The student will be expected to maintain at least a **B (3.0) average** in all seminary work.
  - **The student will arrange** for the seminary to **send a transcript of grades** to the Presbytery's Office of the Stated Clerk **at least annually**.

<sup>2</sup> One academic year is 6 semester or 12 quarter units.

<sup>3</sup> "Close reading of the text" in Princeton catalog.

<sup>4</sup> One academic year is 6 semester or 12 quarter units.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## Appendix 5: Ordination Exams

1. You must pass the five PC(USA) ordination exams. Take the **Bible Content Exam** your **first year of seminary**. The exam will be offered twice a year on the first Friday of February and the Friday before Labor Day. This is the only exam for which you do not need CPM's permission. **You do need to register in advance** for this and all the exams. Registration for all of the standard ordination examinations is now completed through an online process.  
<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/prep4min/standard-ordination-exams/>
2. **Permission from CPM is required** in order to take the other four ordination exams: Worship and Sacraments, Polity, Reformed Theology, and Biblical Exegesis in Greek or Hebrew. Appendix 7 in this document explains how to seek CPM's approval to take exams. These exams are given twice a year: the weekend before Labor Day weekend and the fourth Friday and Saturday in January.
3. Normally students take the **four ordination exams the summer prior to their third year of seminary**. Before taking these exams, you must complete the course designed to prepare you for the exam (polity or confessions, etc.) and the equivalent of 2 years of full-time seminary education. It is strongly recommended that you also complete parish internship or other church experience before taking the exams.
4. If you have a documented disability or feel you need special accommodations, you should include an explanation with your request to CPM. All special accommodations must be approved by CPM and recommended to the Office of Examinations.
5. You must include payment with your exam application.
6. **If you take the exams and fail to pass** one or more exams, you must register again to take the exams you failed, securing permission from CPM and paying any fees.
7. **The process for approval for re-taking a failed exam** is explained in Appendix 7 of this document.
8. In the event you cannot pass one or more ordination exams after diligent effort and several attempts, you might qualify for a substitute examination under our Alternative Examination for Candidates policy. Your liaison can supply you with a copy of the policy if you think you might qualify.
9. For more information about the ordination exams, look on the web at: [www.pcusa.org/exams](http://www.pcusa.org/exams).

## Appendix 6: Internships

### Guidelines for Internships for Los Ranchos Presbytery

1. All of those under care of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos are required to do at least two internships: one in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and the other in a PCUSA parish setting.
2. The CPM will need to pre-approve the choice of each of these two internship sites. Approval is usually sought through the CPM liaison. Additional internships may be required if the student undertakes an internship which CPM did not approve.

Usually a parish site different from the student's home church or work experience is expected; for example, those who come from a large church background, should plan to do internship in a small church, or those who have extensive experience working with youth, should seek an internship which centers on work with adults.

3. It is the student's responsibility to get evaluations from internships, including CPE, to the CPM. These evaluations are required before a candidate can be Certified Ready to Receive a Call.

### Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a national multi-faith theological educational organization. CPE is a process in which pastors integrate personal experience, faith tradition, sacred insights, theology, and psychology in the crucible of human living. CPE aims to prepare pastors for in-depth ministries in settings of significant human encounters. Students must start planning for CPE early; the programs fill up early and often require applications six or more months in advance.

The thirty-five Accredited Centers of the Pacific Region are located in parishes, university medical centers, community hospitals, Veterans Administration hospitals and on the streets of the Inner City. **Accredited programs are listed at <https://www.acpe.edu/>.** The CPE program at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange, supervised by Presbyterian Pastor Rev. Oliver Lee, is highly recommended, but has limited enrollment.

**Los Ranchos requires 1 unit of CPE, which is 400 hours** of supervised spiritual care to persons in crisis or change. The CPE process includes: Group Interaction, didactic instruction, focused reading, clinical experience, verbatims and evaluation.

The majority of CPE students enter CPE to meet seminary and ordination requirements. Persons desiring ministries in institutional settings or careers in pastoral supervision take additional units of CPE. The College of Chaplains requires four units of CPE for recognition as a Board Certified Chaplain. Fees (usually about \$500) are determined by the Center. In some cases the payment is made directly from the Seminary to the Center.

## Parish Internships

### Designing a Parish Internship

Candidates are encouraged to undertake field education in a congregation unlike their current/home church and, in some cases, in a cultural or economic setting unlike his/her own.

Los Ranchos Presbytery's CPM expects parish internships to provide experience in the breath of pastoral ministry. Central to such ministry internships is direct involvement in as many aspects of Presbyterian congregational life and ministry as possible. This includes **direct participation in all aspects of congregational life** including worship, mission, education and nurture, membership care, evangelism, facility management and congregation and staff events. A "depth experience" in one aspect of pastoral ministry (such as "youth ministry" or "pastoral care") may be approved by CPM if it also includes the breadth of experiences on the following form. Working with the internship mentor/supervisor, the student is expected to include the experiences listed on the following form in designing their schedule.

Proposals are expected to include a **weekly meeting** between the supervisor and the intern to review the experiences and learning that is occurring.

A **shadowing program** is strongly recommended as part of the internship design, whereby the intern spends periods of time in shadowing/following the supervising pastor. This should be scheduled in advance, and may not necessarily be an average day, but one which would include as many of the ministries listed on this form as possible.

*Please note: No Inquirer or Candidate who has not been previously ordained as a ruling elder may serve as moderator of a session, administer the Sacraments, or perform a marriage service. An Inquirer or Candidate previously ordained as a ruling elder may be authorized by the Presbytery to preside at the Lord's Supper when invited by a session. (See G-2.0606)*

For pre-approval of internship, the student presents the CPM liaison with this completed form, including the answers to the four questions. The liaison seeks pre-approval from the CPM.

## Parish Internship Pre-Approval Form

**Submit this completed form to your CPM liaison before formalizing the internship relationship. CPM may require you to make changes in the proposal, including a change in the internship to a different church.**

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed dates \_\_\_\_\_ -- \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervising pastor's name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor's email \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor's phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Internship church name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Church address \_\_\_\_\_

**Indicate on each blank below the approximate number of hours to be included in that activity.** In granting approval for an internship proposal, the CPM anticipates that **most of the following ministry experiences** will be included. While most parish internships are expected to total approximately 400 hours, the hours listed in these blanks may total less than 400.

### WORSHIP MINISTRY AND PREACHING MINISTRY:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Assist in planning all aspects of several worship services
- \_\_\_\_\_ Share in worship leadership on a regular basis, including as many aspects of worship leadership as possible and allowable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with Worship Committee as possible, to observe the various issues with which they deal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss sermon preparation with supervising pastor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Preach a sermon and evaluate the sermon with supervising pastor and member(s) of congregation. If possible, videotape the preaching for purposes of critiquing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Observe and assist as appropriate in celebration of Baptisms and Communion.

### PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital, nursing home, and/or in-home calls
- \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss with pastor experiences of hospital, nursing home, and in-home calls
- \_\_\_\_\_ Learn how the Board of Deacons provides care for the congregation.

### SESSION AND DEACON MEETINGS AND MINISTRY:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend a minimum of two Session and Deacon meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Observe new officer training/orientation event.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Observe the preparation of the Session or Deacon meeting agenda.

### MEMORIAL SERVICE MINISTRY (or Funeral Service if held at Funeral Home):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Observe meeting with family and planning the memorial worship service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Observe details of the entire planning process involving the service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If possible, assist in a memorial and grave side committal service.  
*[If there are no deaths in the congregation during the internship, arrange to fulfill these experiences in a another congregation]*

### MEMBERSHIP AND EVANGELISM MINISTRY:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend a meeting of the Membership and Evangelism committee/s

(continued)

**MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY:**

- Attend a meeting of the Mission Committee
- Attend or be part of a particular mission outreach event or project.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND NURTURE MINISTRY:**

- Be involved in general planning of overall Christian Education ministry.
- Be a teacher or primary leader in at least one area of educational ministry.
- Be involved in one youth retreat experience (off campus) if possible.
- Attend at least one Christian Education Committee meeting

**WEDDING MINISTRY:**

- Visit with supervising pastor about all aspects of wedding ministry.
- Assist in or observe a wedding rehearsal and wedding service.  
*[If there are no weddings during the internship, arrange to fulfill these experiences in a another congregation]*

**BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT MINISTRY:**

- Discuss budget process with supervising pastor.
- Attend Budget Committee meeting.
- Learn about monthly financial reports.
- Learn about stewardship emphasis program in use in that congregation.

**CHURCH STAFF MINISTRY:**

- Attend church staff meetings whenever possible.
- Meet weekly with supervising pastor.
- Shadow a pastor for at least the equivalent of 3 days.

**LENGTH OF TIME:**

**Recommended: 400 hours. 15 hours/week for 9 months or summer full time.**

**For Internship Pre-Approval**

Submit to CPM liaison this completed form along with the answers to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper:

1. Why are this church and this mentor a good choice for you and your internship experience?
2. How is this church different from your home church/present church?
3. What is the detailed job description for this internship? Include your responsibilities, work schedule, supervision schedule, potential shadowing activities, etc.
4. What strengths and gifts do you bring to this church? What are you hoping to learn in this internship?

**After Completion of Internship,**

**To receive credit from Los Ranchos for a church internship, send to the Office of the Stated Clerk**

- a letter of evaluation and successful completion from the Supervising Pastor/Mentor
- this above checklist with notations by the Supervising Pastor
- the following evaluation

## INTERNSHIP EVALUATION SUMMARY

To be completed by intern's supervisor upon completion of term of service and returned to CPM

Using the following five point scale, please evaluate your intern's ministry with you during the past year:  
5 = Excellent 4 = Very Good 3 = Good 2 = Fair 1 = Poor

1. \_\_\_\_ How well did your intern accept supervision and guidance?
2. \_\_\_\_ How well did your intern take initiative in accomplishing assignments?
3. \_\_\_\_ How well did your intern perform assignments?
4. \_\_\_\_ How well did your intern manage time in terms of balancing personal health with job demands?
5. \_\_\_\_ How would you characterize your intern's relationships with other staff?
6. \_\_\_\_ How would you characterize your intern's relationships with church members?
7. \_\_\_\_ How well did your intern adapt to the unique climate/character of your congregation?
8. \_\_\_\_ How well did your intern integrate seminary learning into actual practice?  
(e.g. teaching, pastoral care, leading groups, preaching, writing, etc.)
9. \_\_\_\_ How would you characterize your intern's ability to shift leadership style according to groups?

THE FOLLOWING ARE OPEN ENDED ALLOWING YOU TO USE YOUR OWN WORDS TO RESPOND.

Please feel free to use additional pages.

1. What strengths did you observe in your intern?
2. Where are the "growing edges" for this person? (Need to work on these)
3. Specific example of where this intern indicated readiness to become an ordained pastor?
4. Specific example of where this intern experienced a "learning moment" on the road to ministry?
5. Why would you welcome (or not welcome) this person as a member of your staff?
6. What one area of ministry would you recommend this intern focus on? (Could be because it is a gift they need to cultivate—or a challenge that could be an obstacle to successful ministry)
7. What advice would you give to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry for helping this individual move toward ordination?

## Appendix 7: Guidelines for CPM Approvals

Approvals must be secured in advance, prior to beginning CPE, internships, etc. Requests must be in writing and should be emailed to both the Assistant to the Stated Clerk and your liaison. Your liaison will present the request to CPM and advocate for you; it is to your advantage to keep your liaison fully informed. Requests must be received at least 1 week before the scheduled CPM meeting.

Include in approval request:

- 1. For Clinical Pastoral Education** (1 unit from accredited site required)
  - a. CPE center, location and accreditation status by ACPE
  - b. CPE supervisor
  - c. Dates of the program (start and completion dates)
  
- 2. For Internship** (400 hours required)
  - a. Internship organization, location, address
  - b. Supervisor with credentials and contact information
  - c. Supervisory schedule (weekly, bi-weekly, etc)
  - d. Dates of the internship (start and completion dates)
  - e. Job description with total number of hours (FT/PT with hours per week) detailing responsibilities. Use form Appendix 6 of this document.
  
- 3. To Take Ordination Exams** (must have completed equivalent of 2 full-time years of theological study and the course for preparation for your particular exam)
  - a. Date and location of proctored examinations
  - b. Which ORDS you have passed and which ORDS you are taking
  - c. In order to receive approval for re-taking a failed exam, you must send to the Stated Clerk's Office your graded original exam and a written plan outlining remedial steps to ensure passage of the exam. The plan should include:
    - a. a realistic self-appraisal aimed at the deficiencies revealed by the failure of the examination
    - b. a specific plan for overcoming those deficiencies through a program of independent study, coaching, and/or additional academic work.
  
- 4. To Circulate PIF**
  - a. Date of successful completion of Bible Content and ORDS exams
  - b. Start date of Candidacy Phase
  - c. Confirmation in final year of school
  
- 5. Alternate Educational Plans**
  - a. Rationale for alternate plan
  - b. Copy of course syllabus or equivalent
  - c. Professor contact information and credentials
  - d. Form of evaluation and credits

## Appendix 8: Final Assessment Paperwork

### FORMAT FOR PAPERS

Your exegesis paper and sermon reflect the standards ordinarily expected by seminary professors. This includes:

1. Typewritten, double-spaced
2. Complete footnoting (use style you used in seminary)
3. Complete bibliography
4. Correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure

### REQUIRED PAPERS

1. Exegesis Paper (*Have the text approved by CPM moderator before starting.*)
  - a) Select a passage which excites you, intrigues you, and which will be helpful in your ministry.
  - b) Ordinarily it is best to select a passage that is not controversial or obscure.
  - c) The passage should be three to six (3-6) verses in length and represent a complete pericope.
  - d) **Have the text approved by CPM moderator.**
  - e) The paper is to be between 15-20 pages in length (double-spaced).
  - f) Closely follow the attached "Detailed Guidelines for Exegesis Paper."
2. Sermon (*a full manuscript of the sermon*)
  - a) The sermon should directly reflect the work done in your exegesis paper.
  - b) The sermon should reflect the central theological idea and bridge the gap between what the text originally meant and what it means today. Application of the text to the contemporary world should be made.
  - c) A brief statement should accompany the sermon describing the context and setting for the sermon. (i.e., type of church, event, etc.)
  - d) The sermon should be no more than 15 minutes in length and will be preached to CPM. When you preach to CPM, use your usual preaching style. For example, if you usually preach from an outline, preach that way for the committee.
3. Personal Statement of Faith
  - a) The statement is to be limited to one side of paper (8-1/2 x 11) with 1/2" margins.
  - b) It is to be typed single-spaced in readable type (12 pt. Times New Roman or Arial)
  - c) As a summary of your core beliefs as you complete your preparation for ministry, it should demonstrate your theological perspective within the confessional heritage of our Reformed tradition.
  - d) The statement should be carefully thought out and represent what you personally believe. It should be your own and should strike a balance between traditional language and personal wording

Include mention of the key doctrines of the Reformed faith, including at least these topics:

Trinity	Jesus Christ	Holy Spirit
Church	Sacraments	Scripture
Salvation	Christian life and hope	

- e) This Personal Statement of Faith forms the basis for the CPM's examination of your theological views. When you meet with CPM for final assessment, you will be expected to support your written statements with articulate theological reflection. While there are a variety of theological perspectives represented in our church and our confessions, the CPM will want you to place yourself theologically within our biblical and confessional tradition.
- f) The CPM will review your written statement and may make suggestions for clarification and/or revision.
- g) When you have received a call and are ready to be examined by the Presbytery, the last version reviewed by the CPM will be circulated to the members of Presbytery and may be read aloud.

## DETAILED GUIDELINES FOR EXEGESIS PAPER

Follow these directions carefully and in order; they are not suggestions. Make it easy for CPM to follow you by showing your work, numbering and heading the 12 major parts as below.

1. **Begin with prayer**  
Dependence upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit is absolutely fundamental to correct interpretation of Scripture.
2. **Read the text in its original language(s)**  
Reading the text several times in the original language provides an excellent overview of the passage and is the foundation for faithful interpretation.
3. **Compare the text in various translations**  
Comparing various English translations can provide clues to different ways in which the Church has interpreted the passage. Are there discrepancies in wording, word order, and progression of thought? Do these changes imply different meanings?
4. Provide a **complete translation in your own words**.
5. **Establish boundaries of the passage** (pericope)  
Based upon the preliminary reading of the passage in the original languages and various English translations, the boundaries of the text you have chosen may need adjustment. The goal is to establish a recognizable beginning and ending for a cohesive, self-contained unit.
6. **Determine authorship**  
What does your research lead you to conclude about the authorship of this passage? Who wrote the text? Is the author anonymous? Is there evidence that the work has been

shaped by more than one author or by an editor? Is the authorship disputed? If the author is known, how did he/she influence the text? Are there indications that the text has been shaped in a particular way by the author(s) or editor(s)?

7. **Consider the historical and social context**

Understanding the historical and social context for the text is essential for faithful interpretation. It is important to know as much as we can about what the passage meant and how it was used at the time it was written. What bearing do the following considerations have on the interpretation of the text?

- |                                  |                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Social setting                | e. Economics           |
| b. Customs                       | f. Geography           |
| c. Religious/theological setting | g. Date of composition |
| d. Politics                      |                        |

8. **Consider language and literary form**

Scripture can not be correctly understood apart from studying the nuances of language and literary form in the original languages. Examine the passage in light of the literary elements listed below and indicate briefly how they shape the meaning of the text.

- Genre: narrative, poetry, prose, speech, hymn, parable, prophecy
- Structural patterns and style
- Grammatical ambiguities or anomalies
- Studies of terms you find particularly important for the interpretation you are developing

9. **Determine the relationship of the text to other Scripture**

A text must be considered as it relates to the whole of Scripture and not in isolation. The text is studied as it relates to

- its immediate context, i.e., the book in which it occurs
- its context in the broader biblical tradition

How does the context shape the interpretation of this passage?

10. **Identify the theological significance of the text**

Summarize in one or two simple sentences the central idea of the text as shown by your work in sections 1-9 of this paper.

Then discuss briefly

- how the text is used by other biblical writers (where appropriate)
- how the community of believers has interpreted it

11. **Determine setting**

Describe the setting and congregation of the church in which you would preach a sermon based on this text.

- How does this text speak to individuals in that church?  
to the congregation as a whole?
- How does this passage help the Church understand and practice the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

12. **Make application**

After determining what the text originally meant, the text is then applied to the contemporary setting.

- a. What does the text mean today
  - 1) to individuals?
  - 2) to the community of believers?
  - 3) to the world?
- b. How does the passage call us to respond
  - 1) to God?
  - 2) to each other?
  - 3) to the world?

## **Appendix 9: Dissolving the Covenant Relationship/ Removal from Rolls**

This policy addresses a growing concern in this Presbytery with persons under care who fail to correspond with their liaison, fail to respond to inquiries from CPM or fail to make reasonable progress toward ordination. After the CPM and the Inquirer or Candidate has engaged in a process of discernment of his/her call to ministry, the Inquirer or Candidate may wish to withdraw indefinitely from the process. When the person under care is not responsive, it is not possible for the CPM to engage with the Inquirer and Candidate in the process of discernment of his/her call to ministry,. Therefore, after a period of discernment and assessment, the covenant relationship may be dissolved by Presbytery, upon the recommendation of CPM, under the following circumstances:

### I. Release from Covenant Relationship at Request of Inquirer/Candidate

Inquirers and Candidates under the care of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos may request or be given a release from Covenant Relationship. If no charges are pending against the individual and there is no information suggesting grounds for deletion, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry may recommend to Presbytery that the person's name be removed from its role of active Inquirers/Candidates by 'Release from Covenant Relationship'. The records of such individuals will be maintained for at least 10 years without additional review by the committee. An individual so released may, at any time within ten years, request restoration to covenant relationship status and, if granted by the presbytery, would resume their standing (or its equivalent) as of the date of their release.

### II. Dissolving the Covenant Relationship

#### A. Dissolution Before Final Assessment

##### 1. Failure to meet annual contact expectation

- To remain in the covenantal relationship, “under care”, annual consultation using Form 3 and Form 4 is expected.
- Inquirers/Candidates shall go no longer than two years without either an annual consultation, which is recorded in the CPM minutes, or an interview with CPM.

##### 2. Lack of contact

- When the Inquirer/Candidate does not respond to contacts by the CPM liaison, the liaison should request help from the home church of the Inquirer/Candidate, either through the Pastor, Session liaison or church secretary.
- If an Inquirer/Candidate has not responded to CPM’s contacts for one year, a letter will be sent to his/her last known address and to his/her church of membership, advising of the intent of CPM to remove him/her from the roll of

Inquirer or Candidate at the next committee meeting.

3. Failure to progress toward ordination over a three year period

- If CPM deems that an Inquirer or Candidate has not made reasonable progress toward ordination in the last three years, then it will review the Inquirer or Candidate's progress toward ordination. The Inquirer or Candidate will be given at least a 30 days notice of the committee's intent to review their status of "being under care." The individual's home church will be copied on this notice.
- In reviewing the case, CPM could determine conditions under which the individual could continue in the process or could determine to remove the name from the roll of Inquirer or Candidate.

B. Dissolution After "Certified Ready to Receive a Call", for failing to meet regular contact expectation.

All Candidates who have completed Final Assessment are expected, at a minimum, to

- have an annual consultation, using Form 3 and Form 4, with his/her CPM liaison
- meet with CPM every three years to discuss and gain guidance for her/his sense of call, activity in a local church, steps followed to pursue a call and personal circumstances that are affecting the pursuit of a call.

C. Re-entry following dissolution

- If an Inquirer/Candidate who is removed from the process later decides to re-enter the process, the minimum requirements will be completion of Form 1, completion of Form 2A/B—for those withdrawing as Inquirers—or Form 5A/B—for those withdrawing as Candidates, a vocational assessment and a meeting with CPM.
- CPM will evaluate each case individually and may impose additional requirements.