

The Book of Order Requirements

G-14.0801 Commissioned Lay Pastor

a. 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 people, and provide for their nurture and service. This commission is valid only in one or more congregations 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 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 for service, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a commissioned lay pastor until appointed again to a particular congregation by the presbytery.

Period Valid

b. 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.

Authorization to Perform Functions

c. 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 (1)-(6) below:

1. Administer the Lord's Supper
2. Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
3. Moderate the session of the congregation under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery.
4. Have a voice in meetings of presbytery.
5. Have a vote in meetings of the presbytery (such vote to be counted as an elder commissioner for purposes of parity.)
6. Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state.

Supervision

d. 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.

e. When the Presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of an applicant it shall ask the applicant the following questions:

1. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

2. Do you accept the Scripture of the Old and New Testament to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's words to you?

3. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

4. Will you fulfill your commission in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

5. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

6. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

7. Do you promise to further the peace, unity and purity of the church?

8. Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

9. Will you be a faithful commissioned lay pastor, watching over the people, providing for their worship? In your ministry, will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ? (G-14.0207)

Prayer and Statement

f. The applicant having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall pray and say to the applicant: (name) you are now a lay pastor commissioned to lead worship and preach for the time and in the place and set by this presbytery. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.