

**Blackhawk Presbytery
Manual for Commissioned Pastors**

Contents:

- 1. Overview of the Commissioned Pastor Process**
 - 1.1. Introduction
 - 1.2. Definition of a Commissioned Pastor
- 2. Policy and Procedures for Congregations**
 - 2.1. Recruitment of CP Candidates.
 - 2.2. Determining Congregational Needs
 - 2.3. Potential Additional Approved Duties of a CP
 - 2.4. Minimum Compensation for Commissioned Pastors
 - 2.5. Search Process for CP Candidates.
- 3. Policy and Procedures for Potential Candidates**
 - 3.1. Policy
 - 3.2. Outline of the CP Process
- 4. Seeking Phase**
- 5. Learning Phase**
- 6. Certification and Commissioning Phase**
- 7. Ongoing Ministry Phase**
- 8. Appendix**
 - 8.0. Differences between MWS and CP
 - 8.0.1. Defining Service of Commissioned Pastor and Certified Ruling Elder
 - 8.1. CP Process Quick Reference
 - 8.2. CP Form 1a: Application for Enrollment
 - 8.3. CP Form 1b: Reference Form
 - 8.4. CP Form 2: Session Endorsement
 - 8.5. Background Check Policy and Release of Information Form
 - 8.6. CP Form 3: Annual Consultation
 - 8.7. CP Form 4: CPM Recommendation
 - 8.8. CP Form 5: CPM Certification
 - 8.9. Template Covenant Agreement.

1. Overview of the Commissioned Pastor Process

1.1. Introduction:

Blackhawk Presbytery is committed to providing the best possible leadership to all churches within its bounds. Our polity provides for two forms of pastoral leadership in congregations. The first is a Minister of Word and Sacrament, the other is a Commissioned Pastor. It is the intention of this manual to outline the process for authorizing ruling elders to be commissioned as Commissioned Pastors as provided for in the *Book of Order* (G-2.10).

The purpose of the CP Program is to prepare and commission Ruling Elders for preaching and administration of sacraments at places of need within the Presbytery. The Manual for Commissioned Pastors provides guidelines to attract, discover, train, counsel and support qualified Ruling Elders to provide leadership, nurturing and service to member congregations and other service opportunities within Blackhawk Presbytery.

The Committee for Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is responsible for the selection of applicants and the training and the examination of candidates and evaluating the effectiveness of the training. The CPM is also responsible for approving the candidate as ready to accept a position as a Commissioned Pastor.

The Commission on Ministry (COM) is responsible for authorizing the placement and commissioning of CPs.

1.2. Definition of a Commissioned Pastor

A Commissioned Pastor is a Ruling Elder who has been commissioned by Blackhawk Presbytery to limited pastoral service in a validated ministry of the presbytery.

They have been called by God and affirmed by their session and received appropriate training in accordance with the *Book of Order*, G-2.1002, under the supervision of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

The CP is commissioned by the Presbytery to serve a particular congregation or validated ministry in Blackhawk Presbytery after being deemed certified ready to be commissioned, invited by the session of a congregation or other entity, recommended by the Commission on Ministry (COM), and approved by the Presbytery.

The CP may perform pastoral functions not requiring ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament, in agreement with the session, and approved by COM, such as teaching, visitation of members in home or hospital, visitation of prospective members, supervising Sunday school, leading music, prayer meetings, or study groups or conducting funerals. Other duties and privileges may be approved in certain circumstances (See section 2.4)

If commissioned to a congregation, the CP will ordinarily be the primary leader of worship and preacher for the congregation. This person may serve as a CP in full time or part time, salaried or volunteer positions.

2. Policy and Procedures for Congregations.

2.1. Recruitment of CP Candidates.

“We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us” (Romans 12: 6a).

Within every congregation God bestows many and diverse gifts upon the members of that church. It is important that churches actively encourage laypersons to honor, use, and build upon their gifts in the ministry of the church.

It is the duty of all Christians, whether in leadership roles or not, to seek and recognize those believers who have been gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, and to encourage them to explore their calling.

Blackhawk Presbytery is committed to working with local congregations to identify and encourage men and women gifted for ministry as Commissioned Pastors.

It is the Presbytery of Blackhawk’s practice not to assign CPs to their congregation of current membership and/or sponsoring congregation. Exceptions to this policy require a 75% vote of the presbytery.

2.2. Determining Congregational Needs

Congregations considering whether a CP or an MWS would best fulfill their need should spend some time in prayer and discernment.

CP’s are trained, though not ordained as MWS. Theirs is a separate calling. The primary differences between a Minister of Word and Sacrament and a Commissioned Pastor can be found in Appendix (8.1).

Often, a church who decides to go with a CP has money as their leading reason, believing that a CP will be cheaper, however there should be a missional and theological reason to choose a CP, not simply a financial reason.

Often a CP will have differing gifts than an MWS. A CP may have better skills and experience connecting with laity. A CP may have already served in a variety of councils of the church including at the presbytery or higher levels.

At all times it is advisable to consult with the COM during this discernment process.

2.3. Potential Additional Duties of a CP.

Upon the written request of the session to the COM, and with the recommendation of the mentor and supervisor, the CP may also be commissioned by the Presbytery to carry out other functions allowed in the *Book of Order*, G-2.1001.

- a. Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's supper
- b. Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
- c. Moderate the session of the congregation.
- d. Moderate meetings of the congregation.
- e. Have voice and a vote in meetings of the Presbytery.
- f. Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee of the Presbytery, and in accordance with Illinois law.

2.4. Minimum Compensation for Commissioned Pastors

It is the determination of Blackhawk Presbytery that minimum effective salary for Commissioned Pastors is set at 85% of the current presbytery minimum for Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

2.5. Search Process for CP Candidates.

Any congregation interested in hiring a CP should contact their COM representative to find more information.

3. Policy and Procedures for Candidates

3.1. Policy

The Commissioned Pastor preparation program of Blackhawk Presbytery shall be administered by the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

The CPM will have the following responsibilities:

1. Recruitment, admission, or dismissal for cause of candidates to the program.
2. Oversight of the training process.
3. Consultation with Commissioned Pastors in Training as they explore their sense of call.
4. Referral of the candidate to Presbytery's Commission on Ministry for examination, approval of placement, and post-commissioning oversight (see G-2.1003 and G-2.1004) once a CP candidate is ready for a commission.

Application Process for Elders

1. An applicant to the program shall be an elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA).
2. Ordinarily, an applicant to the program will have been a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) for at least two years and active in the life of a particular church within the bounds of the Blackhawk Presbytery for at least one year immediately prior to applying for the Commissioned Pastor program.
3. Application to be a Commissioned Pastor will be filed with the Commission on Preparation for Ministry and will include:
 - a. a completed application form,
 - b. the completed support form from the church session or its equivalent
 - c. and an interview with CPM.
4. Applicants for whom English is not a primary language may apply to take courses in their primary languages, as available, with the prior approval of the CPM.
5. Applicants who have previous study in required areas may submit those to CPM for consideration as a substitute for equivalent courses. Applicants may also show the CPM documented experience from employment, church, or academic settings, to stand as equivalent to any of the Areas of Training and the CPM will advise the applicant as to the substitute credit that may be applied in their unique case.
6. Applicants to the program should be aware that acceptance to this program does not guarantee placement as a Commissioned Pastor within Blackhawk Presbytery
7. Application packets are available through CPM, or on the Blackhawk Presbytery website.

3.2. Outline of the CP Process

Those persons seeking to become a CP will follow a different track or program than those seeking ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament. A CP's ability to preach, teach and lead worship may be seen as a gift of the Spirit developed through experience, practice, and formal training.

To further develop the gifts for service in a particular field of ministry, the Presbytery, through the CPM and COM, will guide the CP candidate through a program of training and preparation for pastoral service. For others who wish to attend training, but do not know how they are called to serve, the CPM and the CP candidate will work together to prayerfully discern God's call for the individual.

The program track for a CP is:

1. **Seeking Phase:** The individual seeking to become a CP receives endorsement from the session of their own church and is evaluated and received by the CPM.
2. **Learning Phase:** With the authorization, guidance and support of the CPM, the CP candidate will engage in study and preparation for service as a CP.
3. **Commissioning Phase:** After completing the program of training, preparation, and discernment with the CPM, and after the CPM determines the CP candidate is ready to receive a commission to a field of service or congregation, they will be recommended to the COM. At the recommendation of the COM and with the approval of the Presbytery, the CP may be commissioned to a particular congregation or validated ministry.

During the entirety of the CP preparation process, the CP in Training shall

1. Meet at least annually with their sponsoring session.
2. Meet at least annually with the CPM, supplying a CP Form 3 for every meeting.
3. Demonstrate work towards completing the class requirements.
4. Remain active in the life and work of their congregation.
5. Receive instruction and practice in all areas of church life.

In each step of the program, particular responsibilities are assigned to:

1. The CP Candidate
2. The Session of the Sponsoring Congregation.
3. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry
4. The Commission on Ministry

4. Seeking Phase

During this phase a Ruling Elder, believing they have been called by God to be a Commissioned Pastor (CP), seeks validation of the call by their session and then by the Presbytery through the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM).

Core Responsibilities during the Seeking Phase:

The CP Candidate Applicant

1. Has been a member of a PC(USA) congregation within the Blackhawk Presbytery for at least one year prior to submitting the application to the session.
2. Has been ordained a Ruling Elder within the PC(USA) for at least six months. They need not be actively serving on session to qualify.
3. They shall be regular in attendance and active in the life of their congregation. They shall have demonstrated leadership ability, pastoral concern and pastoral ability.
4. The applicant should have an extended conversation with their pastor about their sense of call and the gifts and tasks of ministry before approaching CPM.
5. The applicant is examined by the session of their member church and seeks their endorsement.
6. Applicant shall fill out and submit form CP 1A to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) supplying three references as outlined in the application. The three references will each fill out a form CP 1B to be submitted to CPM. The CPM chair shall provide the forms upon request, or they can be found on the Blackhawk Presbytery website under "Forms".
7. Meets with the CPM for a review of their application, and approval to enter the process.

The Session of the Sponsoring Congregation

1. The session shall contact the CPM for orientation to the process.
2. Applicants shall meet with their session to be interviewed to receive the session's endorsement for application to the CP program. If approved, the session shall fill out form CP 2 and submit it to CPM.
3. The proposed CP Candidate and the session together will initiate contact with the CPM.
4. The session will appoint one or more of its members as liaison for the duration of the CP process.
5. Encourages, supports, and prays for the CP candidate throughout their time of preparation for service.
6. May offer to provide financial assistance to the CP candidate for class work or study.
7. May offer opportunities for service and preparation for ministry through working in the congregation under the supervision of the pastor(s), either paid or volunteer positions.
8. The session shall renew their endorsement of the candidate on an annual and ongoing basis.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. After receiving the Application Form and Session Endorsement Form, the CPM shall meet with the applicant. The interview shall include discussion of the individual's:
 - a. personal faith
 - b. sense of call
 - c. motives in seeking enrollment in the program
 - d. competency in Book of Order requirements
 - e. communication skills
 - f. willingness to engage in study/mentoring program
 - g. review of information contained in application
2. Confidentially interviews the references included in the application concerning the applicant's qualifications, character, and aptitude for pastoral service. The CPM may also initiate inquiries to others who may be familiar with the applicant.
3. The CPM will ask the applicant to address inadequacies in any area before recommending further preparation as a CP.
4. Once the committee approves the applicant to enter the process, they shall vote to receive the applicant as a CP Candidate. The CP Candidate shall then begin their training in the CP process.
5. A CPM liaison will be appointed by CPM to counsel and guide each CP candidate through the process. The CPM liaison relationship includes.
 - a. Designing the learning plan for the CP candidate.
 - b. Validating directed studies done in concurrence with the agencies (presbyteries, colleges, seminaries, workshops, etc.).
6. CP Candidates shall meet annually with the CPM to be examined as to personal faith, motives for seeking commission, and the areas of instruction they may have already received. The candidate will fill out form CP 3 for each annual consultation.

5. Learning Phase

During this phase, the CP candidate will acquire competency and skills required for the role of Commissioned Pastor under the supervision and direction of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) (*Book of Order*, G-2.1002).

Upon entry into the CP training phase, the CP candidate and the CPM liaison will adopt a Learning Covenant that will be written and signed as a covenant between the candidate, their CPM liaison and the CPM.

The Learning Covenant will be tailored for each individual including plans for completion of all training requirements and realistic timelines for the completion of each requirement. Training will not require the same levels of knowledge required of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

Core Responsibilities during the Learning Phase:

The CP Candidate

1. The CP candidate needs to take the initiative through this phase of the process.
2. They will explore available training options with the approval of the CPM.
3. They will enroll and begin their program of study.
4. They may with their CPM liaison find an appropriate internship program.
5. The candidate will sign and submit to COM a statement declaring the absence of any convictions of sexual or financial misconduct.

The Session of the Sponsoring Congregation

1. Meets with the CP candidate annually through their course of study to review progress and to encourage, support, and pray for the CP.
2. May offer to provide financial assistance to the CP candidate for class work or study.
3. May offer opportunities for service and preparation for ministry through working in the congregation under the supervision of the pastor(s).

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. Available CP training programs from the Synod of Lincoln Trails, other governing bodies, seminaries, colleges, etc., are reviewed and an authorized list of available programs is created and provided to CP candidate.
2. Reviews and approves independent study arrangements and other Presbytery sponsored training programs as requested by a CP candidate.
3. Meets with the CP candidate at least annually through this phase to review their progress and determine other needs or future plans.
4. May assist in facilitating an internship or find appropriate internship for the CP candidate.
5. The CPM will ensure that a criminal background check is conducted.

Course Requirements

The CP candidate, with the approval of the CPM, may take classes offered by the Presbytery and designated for CP candidates; may enroll in a designated CP training

program offered by a college, seminary, the Synod of Lincoln Trails, or another governing body as approved and recommended by the CPM.

There are eight areas of competence that are required by Blackhawk Presbytery.

1. Introduction to Old Testament
2. Introduction to New Testament
3. Introduction to Preaching
4. Introduction of Christian Education
5. Introduction to Pastoral Care
6. Presbyterian Polity
7. Reformed Worship and Sacraments
8. Introduction to Reformed Theology

Additional work may be required depending on the particular candidate's background and experience as well as the type of ministry a CP candidate is preparing to undertake.

Other Requirements

In addition to the training requirements above, CP Candidates must:

1. Complete a Psychological Evaluation by **Leaderwise** to evaluate the fit of the candidate for the ministry, early in the CP process. The cost for this evaluation is borne by Blackhawk Presbytery, however it is incumbent on the candidate to schedule the evaluation.
2. Attendance at an approved workshop on healthy boundaries is required prior to being approved for a commission.
3. The CPM may also require a supervised internship if it feels it is appropriate to prepare the candidate for pastoral ministry. The CPM will, in consultation with the candidate, determine the scope and length of the internship.
4. Special Circumstances—ordinarily Certified Christian Educators applying to be a Commissioned Pastor are deemed qualified to serve having completed requirements of the Book of Order G-2.1103

6. Certification and Commissioning Phase

At this phase, the CP Candidate is formally commissioned by the Presbytery to a specific ministry. The presbytery's Commission on Ministry has oversight of the commissioning Phase.

Core Responsibilities during the Certification and Commissioning Phase:

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. CPM shall examine the CP Candidate to determine their fitness for pastoral ministry. This assessment will include:
 - a. a review of all Learning Covenant requirements,
 - b. assessment and review of the CP Candidate's Faith Statement,
 - c. and a final sermon review including exegesis, preparation, and delivery; perhaps in a congregational or alternate setting.
2. After successful completion of the examination, CPM will present the candidate to Presbytery as certified and ready for a commission (CP Form 5).

The CP Candidate

1. Upon successful completion of all items listed in the learning covenant, the CP Candidate will provide the following documents to the CPM.
 - a. A personal statement of faith.
 - b. A brief sermon (5-9 minutes).
 - c. Before preaching the sermon, the committee shall be told the context and setting where this sermon would be presented.
 - d. Plans for continuing education.
 - e. A written self-evaluation (no more than three pages) about their experience during their training and their readiness to be Commissioned into Service.
2. Once receiving the certification from Blackhawk Presbytery, the CP Candidate may begin the search for suitable employment. At this point, working with the COM, they may:
 - a. Be added to Preaching Supply List and become available for potential match with congregation(s).
 - b. Complete a CP Information Form / Resume and may be considered for commissioning to a specific congregation or validated ministry as a Commissioned Pastor.
 - c. The CP will be prepared to interview and preach for sessions or PNCs of the congregations that are considering CPs.

The Session of the Hiring Congregation.

1. If the session, at the recommendation of the PNC, invites the CP candidate to be employed by the congregation, the session will draw up a Covenant Agreement between the CP, the congregation, and the Presbytery specifying duties to perform, the time expectations, and terms of employment including compensation, benefits, vacation, study leave, etc.

- a. The terms shall include the name/s of the local commission church/es, the initiating date of service, the length of service and the compensation for services.
 - b. The terms shall include whether or not the individual is permitted to perform any additional duties approved by the presbytery (see section 2.4)
 - c. Once approved, the contract shall be signed by the Chair (or Vice-Chair) of COM, the Clerk of Session(s), and the individual.
 - d. The session will request the COM to recommend to the Presbytery that the CP candidate be commissioned to perform certain additional designated responsibilities. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1001).
2. The session requests COM to recommend to the Presbytery that the CP candidate be commissioned to the congregation or validated ministry as specified in the CP Covenant Agreement.
 3. The session will conduct a service of recognition welcoming the CP to their congregation and acknowledging the Presbytery's "Service of Commissioning."

The Commission on Ministry

1. At the request of the session, the COM may recommend that the Presbytery authorize a CP to perform particular additional responsibilities. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1001). The COM may require some additional training of the CP prior to recommending the granting of these additional responsibilities.
2. The COM recommends to the Presbytery that the CP candidate be commissioned by the Presbytery to the particular congregation or validated ministry, based on the approved Covenant Agreement with the Commissioned Pastor.
3. The COM coordinates a "Service of Commissioning" at a Presbytery Assembly meeting (*Book of Order*, G-2.1003).
4. The COM assigns a mentor/supervisor to the CP and through the mentor/supervisor annually reviews the work of the CP. (*Book of Order*, G-2.1004)
 - a. The mentor/supervisor will be a Minister of Word and Sacrament who is a member in good standing of Blackhawk Presbytery and who is appointed by the COM to be in a relationship with the CP.
 - b. The mentor and supervisor may be the pastor serving as moderator of the session of the commissioning congregation when the CP will not be serving as moderator.

Guidelines for developing an appropriate commission:

CPs are commissioned by the Presbytery of Blackhawk upon the recommendation of the COM to one of the following areas:

1. A specific congregation
2. A specific group or cluster of cooperating congregations.
 - a. Congregations may be grouped by geographic area, demographic similarities, or any other reason found suitable to the congregations and approved by the COM.
 - b. Each Congregation shall be listed in the covenant agreement.
 - c. Each congregation's Clerk of Session must sign the covenant agreement.

3. A new church development
4. A validated ministry

If the CP is to be commissioned to a validated ministry, rather than a congregation of Blackhawk Presbytery, then the CP will follow the same procedure through the COM for confirmation of that field of service as a validated ministry as followed by Ministers of the Word and Sacrament. (*Book of Order*, G-2.0503a and the *Commission on Ministry Manual*)

This commission shall be valid for a period up to three years as designated by the session, COM, and the CP and approved by the Presbytery. The commission expires on the thirtieth of November on the year of expiration. It may be renewed at expiration or terminated at any time at the discretion of the session, the CP, or COM, with approval of the Presbytery.

7. Ongoing Ministry Phase

The COM shall be responsible for post-commissioning oversight and care of the CP, including oversight of the CP's annual review.

Ongoing Mentorship and Supervision

Once commissioned to a particular congregation or field service, the CP shall communicate at least semi-annually with their assigned mentor (*Book of Order*, G-2.1004).

The mentor and supervisor will meet at least annually with the CP and members of the session of the commissioning congregation to conduct an annual review of the work of the CP. The results of this annual review will be communicated to the CP, the commissioning congregation, and the COM.

CP's, whether in an active commission, or certified ready to receive a commission, remain under the authority and supervision of the COM. The COM shall provide for regular periodic gathering of CPs serving in congregations for support, education, and spiritual enrichment.

Continuing Education

The CP shall participate in continuing education after consulting with their mentor and supervisor for particular recommendations.

Annual Contract Review

At the conclusion of the initial term of the commission, if the session of the church and the CP desire to renew the commission, they will make such a request of the COM three (3) to six (6) months prior to the expiration of the current term.

At this time, A COM representative will meet with the CP, the session, and the moderator of the session (if not the CP) to review and update the covenant agreement between the CP and the congregation. Commissions may be granted for up to three years at a time, but contracts must be renewed each year. Contracts expire on the thirtieth of November on the year of expiration.

The results of this meeting should be reported to the COM and recommendations made to COM for action by the Presbytery.

APPENDIX 8.0 (Summary of Differences between MWS and CP)

**Presbytery of Blackhawk
Commission on Ministry
Comparison of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Pastors**

	Ministers of the Word and Sacrament – Called and Installed	Ministers of the Word and Sacrament - Temporary Supply	Commissioned Pastors
Functions			
Preaching	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Preside</i> at The Lord's Supper	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Baptism	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Funerals	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weddings	Yes	Yes	Yes, per local law
Moderate session	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Moderate congregational mtg	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
May ordain elders / deacons	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Voice and vote at Presbytery (if PCUSA)	Yes	Yes	Yes, if authorized
Call / Hiring			
Utilizes Church Leadership Connection	Yes, generally	Sometimes	No
PNC coordinates search and hiring	Yes, generally	Sometimes	Sometimes
Hired by session or congregation	Congregation	Session	Session
Requires approval of COM	Yes	Yes	Yes
Installation commission	Yes	No	No
Term of Call	No term	1 year/ renewable	1-3 years/ renewable
Compensation			
Presbytery minimum terms of call	Apply	Apply	85% of MWS Effective Salary
BOP health plan	Pastor Participation plan required	May be in BOP Pastor Participation, Minister's Choice, or another plan	Optional
Pension	Required	Sometimes	Optional
Reimbursable Expenses	Required	Generally required	Optional

APPENDIX 8.0.1 Defining Service of Commissioned Pastor and Certified Ruling Elder**(Appendix approved Nov. 17, 2022)**

For the purpose of this appendix, Commissioned Pastor will be referred to as “CP” and Certified Ruling Elder as “CRE”.

A CP in Blackhawk Presbytery is Ruling Elder working within the parameters as defined in Section 1.2. in the Commissioned Pastor Manual. In short, they have been certified for commissioning and have entered into a covenant agreement with a particular congregation to perform the pastoral duties that are agreed upon between that individual Congregation and the CP and that are allowed (per Appendix 8.0 of the CP Manual, page 15).

A CRE by definition in Blackhawk Presbytery is a Ruling Elder that the Committee for the Preparation for Ministry (CPM) has certified as ready for commissioning but is not in a covenant agreement with a particular congregation. They completed the processes necessary to become a CP as defined in the CP Manual (Section 3.2).

CRE’s should make themselves available on the Presbytery Pulpit Supply list.

CRE’s can serve as Pulpit Supply for an individual congregation for up to three consecutive weeks without a contract agreement.

They may enter an agreement to serve as Stated Pulpit Supply for a congregation for a specified period of time, with COM approval. Such an agreement would be for only leading Worship Services and NOT presiding over any of the other duties that a CP might be asked to do in a commissioned agreement.

With approval of COM prior to the service, they can preside over the Lord’s Supper on an individual basis.

With prior approval of COM, they may moderate a session meeting.

CRE’s are not approved to preside over Wedding Ceremonies within the parameters of the PCUSA. (see note below for CP’s)

Please note, CP’s may be commissioned to preside for Christian wedding ceremonies within the congregation they serve (as local laws allow). If the CP is sought to perform a wedding outside of the congregation; while the State of Illinois will recognize such a wedding, it would be outside of your commission to present this as a ceremony within the parameters of the PCUSA.

APPENDIX 8.1 (CP Process Quick Reference)

Blackhawk Presbytery
Progress Checklist for Commissioned Pastors

Seeking Phase

<u>Date</u>	<u>Task</u>
_____	Date Candidate joined as a member of the congregation: _____
_____	Date Candidate was ordained as a Ruling Elder: _____
_____	Form CP1a (<i>Application for Certification Program for Commissioned Pastor</i>) Completed and Submitted to the CPM
_____	Form CP1b (<i>Reference for Commissioned Pastor Applicant</i>) [One form from each of three (3) references] Completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Interview with the session of the Sponsoring Congregation
_____	Form CP2 (<i>Session Evaluation and Recommendation</i>) Completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Interview with the CPM.
_____	Candidate received as a CP In Training by the CPM
_____	Liaison assigned by the CPM: _____

Learning Phase

<u>Date</u>	<u>Task</u>
_____	Candidate along with their liaison develop an appropriate learning covenant.
_____	Learning Covenant is approved by CPM
_____	Candidate enrolls and begins their program of study.
_____	Training completed: Introduction to the Old Testament
_____	Training completed: Introduction to the New Testament
_____	Training completed: Pastoral Care
_____	Training completed: Presbyterian Polity
_____	Training completed: Reformed Worship and Sacraments
_____	Training completed: Introduction to Preaching
_____	Training completed: Foundations of Christian Education
_____	Training completed: Reformed Theology
_____	Training completed: Internship (if required)
_____	Training completed: Healthy Boundaries Workshop
_____	Psychological Evaluation performed.

Certification and Commissioning Phase

<u>Date</u>	<u>Task</u>
_____	Personal Statement of Faith completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Written Self-Evaluation completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Sermon and Context Statement prepared and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Sermon Preached to the CPM.
_____	Continuing Education plans completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	Affidavit declaring the absence of any convictions of sexual or financial misconduct completed and submitted to the CPM.
_____	COM ensures that a criminal background check is conducted.
_____	Candidate examined by the CPM.
_____	Form CP4 (<i>CPM Evaluation/Recommendation</i>) completed by the CPM and submitted to the Presbytery.
_____	Candidate is presented and approved by the Presbytery Assembly.
_____	Candidate is Certified by the Presbytery as ready to receive a commission.
_____	Mentor/Supervisor assigned by the COM: _____
_____	Session in Coordination with the COM develop an appropriate Covenant Agreement.
_____	Covenant Agreement is signed by all parties.
_____	The CPM recommends to the Presbytery that the CP Candidate be commissioned based on the signed Covenant Agreement.
_____	Presbytery Assembly commissions CP at an appropriate Service of Commissioning.
_____	Session conducts a Service of Recognition welcoming the CP to their congregation.

APPENDIX 8.2 (CP Form 1a)**Blackhawk Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry*****Application for Certification Program for Commissioned Pastor (CP)***

Applicant's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

(Street or PO Box)

(City)

(State)

(Zip)

Phone (Home): _____ Phone (Cell): _____

Email Address: _____

Gender: Male Female Date of Birth: _____

Occupation/Place of Employment: _____

Church of Membership: _____

(Name of Church)

(City, State)

What church occupation (Pastor, Youth Leader, etc.) are you interested in at this time?

_____**Academic Background**

List the academic institutions you have attended, beginning with high school, and complete the information requested:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Dates Attended</u>	<u>Program/Major</u>	<u>Diploma/Degree</u>
--------------------	-----------------------	----------------------	-----------------------

Describe any previous experience in lay preaching or lay pastor training:

Occupational History

List the three most recent full-time or part-time positions in which you have been employed and attach it to this application. Provide the following information: job title, dates of employment, aspect most enjoyed, aspect most disliked.

Church History

Date and place of baptism:

Date and place of profession of faith:

Church membership:

 Date joined:

 Date ordained a ruling elder:

 Date ordained a deacon:

List other churches where you have been a member.

List areas of involvement in your local church, both as a participant and as a leader. Indicate areas of leadership.

List areas of involvement in Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly.

List voluntary services, civic or social organizations of which you are or have been a member. Indicate your extent of participation and your role.

List any factors that may place limits on your ability to receive training or to serve as a Commissioned Pastor (CP).

Questions for Reflection

Write a response to each of the following questions and attach to this application.

1. In one or two paragraphs, describe yourself as a person.
2. Describe briefly what it means to you to be a Commissioned Pastor? What has motivated you to consider this program?
3. Write a brief statement of your personal faith (approximately 300-500 words). Your statement should describe (at minimum) what you believe about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and your relationship to them.
4. What does it mean to you to be a Presbyterian?
5. Describe your current spiritual journey, spiritual practices, prayer life, and disciplines.

6. Comment on your interests, hobbies, and stress-relieving activities.

References

Please list three people who will serve as references. One should be your pastor or a pastor within Blackhawk Presbytery.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship: _____

Please ask your references to complete Form BHP-CP 1B (Reference for Commissioned Pastor Applicant), including the questions for reflection, and send their responses under separate cover directly to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at the following address: Blackhawk Presbytery, Attn: CPM, P.O. Box 476, Oregon, IL 61061.

I promise, in reliance upon the grace of God, to participate diligently and wholeheartedly with the Session and the Presbytery's Committee on Preparation on Ministry/Committee of Ministry in exploring my vocation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

After completing the application, make a copy for yourself and submit the original to the Clerk of Session or Moderator of the Session of your home church.

APPENDIX 8.3 (CP Form 1b)**Blackhawk Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry*****Reference for Commissioned Pastor Applicant***

Background information for (applicant's name): _____

Reference Name: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Length of time known person: _____

Date: _____

The person named above is seeking admission to the Commissioned Pastor program. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry would appreciate your candid response to the following questions:

1. To what extent does the applicant adhere to Christ's teachings?
2. What is your experience of the applicant's commitment to the Presbyterian Church (USA)?
3. What special gifts, talents and skills does the applicant exhibit for service as a Commissioned Pastor?
4. What is the most recent example of the applicant's service to the church?
5. If the applicant were your Commissioned Pastor, what specific areas would you wish him/her to improve?
6. If you are a Minister of Word and Sacrament and a member of Blackhawk Presbytery, would you be willing to serve as the applicant's mentor if asked?

Please use a separate sheet(s) for your response, attach it to this form, and send your response directly to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at the following address:

**Blackhawk Presbytery
Attn: Committee on Preparation for Ministry
PO Box 476
Oregon, IL 61061**

APPENDIX 8.4 (CP Form 2)

**Blackhawk Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry**

**Application for Certification Program for Commissioned Pastor (CP)
Session Evaluation and Recommendation**

The Session of _____ Presbyterian Church of _____
met with _____ on _____
and submits the following report:

The Session

_____ **Endorses** the applicant to be trained by the Presbytery to become a Commissioned Pastor.

_____ **Does not endorse** the applicant to be trained by the Presbytery to become a Commissioned Pastor.

This report was prepared for the Session by the Clerk:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Phone	Date

Attested by the Moderator of the Session:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Phone	Date

The Session will copy and mail the completed application and attachments to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry at the following address:

**Blackhawk Presbytery
Attn: CPM
PO Box 476
Oregon, IL 61061**

APPENDIX 8.5 (Background Check Policy and Release of Information Form)

Presbytery of Blackhawk Background Check Policy

Who is included?

All active members of the Presbytery of Blackhawk (Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Pastors, and Certified Christian Educators who are Ruling Elders) and other ministers who are serving within the bounds of the Presbytery of Blackhawk with the exception of non-active honorably retired clergy.

All persons seeking membership into the Presbytery of Blackhawk. (Completion necessary before meeting with the Commission on Ministry's Examination Team.)

All paid staff members of the Presbytery of Blackhawk.

It is incumbent on all member churches to follow prudent procedures with their own staff and for persons who work with youth and other vulnerable populations.

What is included?

National and state criminal records including the sex offender registry.

Financial background checks will only be done in specific situation where they are warranted (e.g., treasurer of the presbytery).

What is the procedure?

Those who are included in the background check policy are asked to complete a self-reporting form indicating any prior felony convictions and to give written permission to the presbytery to initiate the criminal background check process.

All results of background checks will be sent to the General Presbyter or designated presbytery staff. If any irregularities appear, the General Presbyter will contact the Commission on Ministry (for ministers) or Personnel (for employees) to determine if any further action is necessary. The General Presbyter and the appropriate committee will make a determination about the most appropriate pastoral response.

Criminal background check records will be kept in a separate personnel file accessible only by the General Presbyter, or the General Presbyter's designee. Each individual upon whom a background check has been done will have access to his or her own background check results. Under normal circumstances, the presbytery office will only indicate that a background check has been done and a clearance has been given.

Background checks are to be conducted regularly every five years, ordinarily at the beginning of the year (January 2023, 2028, etc.). Those who have entered their ministry in the Presbytery of Blackhawk within the last 18 months will not be required to repeat the background check until the following regular check.

What is the cost?

Costs associated with the background checks required by this policy will be borne by the Presbytery of Blackhawk.

Refusal to give consent to run a background check will disqualify a person for consideration for membership in the Presbytery of Blackhawk, or employment by the Presbytery of Blackhawk.

**Presbytery of Blackhawk
Disclosure Authorization and Release Form**

For Pre-Employment, Continued Employment, or Presbytery Membership

I understand that in connection with my application for employment, volunteer services, continued employment, and/or membership, the Presbytery of Blackhawk, its consultant Trusted Employees, their agents or employees, shall be performing, requesting, obtaining, or conducting a background check on me. This background check will include only national and state criminal records, including the sex offender registry. If my position involves handling money and/or having access to monies and/or other transferrable money instruments, my credit history may also be checked.

I understand that the Presbytery of Blackhawk may rely on any part of this information in determining whether to extend an offer of employment, volunteer duties, or membership to me. I further understand that if any adverse action is taken by the Presbytery of Blackhawk, or if the Presbytery of Blackhawk chooses not to extend an offer of employment/volunteer duties, or membership to me based upon the information, that I will be provided a copy of such information.

I have read this Disclosure Authorization and Release Form and by signing below hereby authorize investigators to conduct a background check as described herein. I hereby release any and all investigators, including the Presbytery of Blackhawk, from any and all liability related to the procurement or disclosure of any information provided by me or obtained about me in connection with the Presbytery. I further direct and authorize Investigators to conduct the background check and further authorize any third parties who may be the custodians of or in possession of the requested information to disclose such information to investigators in connection with this background check.

Although furnishing the Social Security number is not optional, it shall be used for NO other purpose than to make the process for conducting a background check more accurate. It shall not be sold, or in any way transferred to a third party except for the express purpose of conducting the background check. If applicable, list on the reverse any prior felony convictions with date and state.

Applicant Signature	Date
Printed Name	Social Security Number
Date of Birth	Former Last Name(s) if applicable
Current Address	Previous Address

Policy approved Nov. 8, 2022

APPENDIX 8.6 (CP Form 3)**Blackhawk Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry****Application for Certification Program for Commissioned Pastor (CP)
*Questions for Annual Consultation***

Name: _____

Please return form by: _____ to _____

For your annual consultation at _____ AM/PM on _____

At _____

- I. Attachments
 - a. Certification of Training completed, grades if applicable
- II. Information Update
 - a. When will you complete your training?

- III. Reflect on and respond briefly in the following areas of your training?
 - a. Old Testament
 - b. New Testament
 - c. Church History
 - d. Practice of Ministry
 - e. Other
- IV. Briefly describe your spiritual disciplines, including your participation in the worship and mission of a Presbyterian congregation.
- V. Describe your relationship with your peers, authority figures, family, and others who are significant to you. What are the implications of those relationships in your ministry?
- VI. Describe recent experiences of emotional impact, if any, and how you dealt with them.
- VII. Comment on areas in which you believe you are growing and identify areas in which you feel the need for progress.
- VIII. List other areas which you wish to discuss with the committee including financial needs, family concerns, etc.

APPENDIX 8.7 (CP Form 4)

**Blackhawk Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry**

**Applicant for Certification Program for Commissioned Pastor
CPM Evaluation/Recommendation**

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry of Blackhawk Presbytery met with _____
On _____ and submits the following report:

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

_____ **Endorses** the applicant to be trained by the Presbytery to become a Commissioned Pastor.

_____ **Does not endorse** the applicant to be trained by the Presbytery to become a Commissioned Pastor.

Signed: _____
Moderator, CPM

Signed: _____
Applicant

APPENDIX 8.8 (CP Form 5)

**Blackhawk Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry**

Certification Notice for CP Candidates

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry of Blackhawk Presbytery met with _____

On _____ and submits the following report:

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry

_____ **Certifies** that the candidate has been properly trained and is ready to receive a commission to a validated ministry within the bounds of Blackhawk Presbytery.

_____ **Does not certify** the candidate as ready to receive a commission. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry believes that the candidate has the following deficiencies regarding their readiness to serve as a Commissioned Pastor. The CPM would be willing to reconsider certification once these deficiencies have been corrected.

Deficiencies that need to be corrected:

Signed: _____
Moderator, CPM

Signed: _____
Applicant

APPENDIX 8.9 (Template Covenant Agreement)

**PRESBYTERY OF BLACKHAWK COVENANT FOR:
TEMPORARY, SUPPLY, INTERIM & COMMISSIONED PASTORAL
RELATIONSHIPS**

This form shall be used for all Temporary, Supply, Interim, and Commissioned Pastor relationships.

This form shall not be used for Installed Minister of Word and Sacrament Pastors.

This covenant is between the Session of _____, Presbytery of Blackhawk, and Pastor _____. The term of the Covenant begins _____ and ends _____. The term may not exceed 1 year for Temporary, Supply, and Interim relationships. Commissioned Pastor relationships cannot exceed 3 years. All relationships may be renewed with approval of all parties.

Denomination of Membership: _____

If a PC(USA) pastor, Presbytery of Membership: _____

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This ministry will include (Check all fields pertaining to this position.)

_____ Leading worship (in person and/or via recorded messages) each Sunday and for the following additional services _____

_____ Moderating session and congregational meetings

_____ Administering the sacrament of Holy Communion

_____ Performing baptisms, as approved by the Session

_____ Pastoral calls to the ill, homebound, and other members

_____ May officiate at weddings and funerals, but not required

_____ Assist the church committees, boards, and Session to carry out assigned tasks

_____ Administrative duties

_____ Exercise voice and vote in Presbytery Assembly meetings

_____ Other: _____

_____ Other: _____

The Session estimates that fulfilling these duties will require _____ hours per week/month.

COMPENSATION (Based on Presbytery Minimums)

1. Cash Salary (Per Month: \$_____) The term of the Covenant = \$_____
2. Housing (Per Month: \$_____) The term of the Covenant = \$_____
- Total Effective Salary** (Monthly: \$_____) Term of Covenant = \$_____

OTHER COMPENSATION TERMS

1. SECA Supplement \$ _____
2. PC(USA) Board of Pensions medical coverage (or other health insurance) \$ _____
3. PC(USA) Board of Pensions retirement (or another pension plan) \$ _____
4. Healthcare Reimbursement Arrangement \$ _____
5. Additional Compensation or Allowances (please specify below) \$ _____

Vacation of four weeks, including four Sundays, per year

Continuing education of 2 weeks, including two Sundays, per year

REIMBURSEABLE EXPENSES (By Voucher)

1. Automobile expense (_____ per mile, @ current IRS rate) \$ _____
2. Business / professional expense \$ _____
3. Continuing education \$ _____

OTHER TERMS

It is agreed that this covenant may be terminated upon _____ days' written notice by the Temporary, Supply, Interim, and Commissioned Pastor, the Session, or the Presbytery. If terminated by the Presbytery or the Session prior to the end of the covenant period, compensation and benefits will continue for up to _____ days after the date of termination of ministry.

By signing below, the parties acknowledge that they have read and agree to the Ethical Boundaries Training Policy and the Covenant of Closure (Pastor Who Resigns, or Retires) Policy of the Presbytery of Blackhawk (all are found on the Presbytery's website under Resources/Bylaws & Policies, 4. Commission on Ministry Policies).

Date of Session Action: _____

Clerk of Session signature: _____ Date: _____

Pastor signature: _____ Date: _____

COM signature: _____ Date: _____