

**REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMISSIONING
OF
LAY PASTORS
HOLSTON PRESBYTERY**

The purpose of these policies and guidelines is to establish minimum requirements for commissioning Lay Pastors, and the continuing education and supervision of Lay Pastors serving in the bounds of Holston Presbytery.

BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER REQUIREMENTS -

The Book of Church Order (G-14.0801) establishes criteria for the equipping of Lay Pastors their ongoing accountability to the Presbytery. These are:

1. Lay Pastors are commissioned to lead worship and to preach.
2. The Presbytery through its Committee on Ministry (COM) shall designate congregations that Lay Pastors may serve.
3. Lay Pastors are trained and equipped by the Presbytery. Preparation shall include:
 - a. Biblical Studies
 - b. Reformed Theology
 - c. Presbyterian Polity and Pastoral Care
 - d. Worship Leadership and Sacraments
4. Candidates for commissioning are examined by the Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) Subcommittee of the COM regarding:
 - a. Their personal faith
 - b. Their motives for seeking the commission
 - c. The areas of instruction referred to in section three
5. The Commission is valid for three (3) years; however, recertification shall be done annually.
6. The Commission can be terminated at the discretion of the Presbytery through its COM.
7. A Commissioned Lay Pastor may not perform marriages, may not moderate sessions, nor be allowed to administer the Sacrament of Baptism.
8. The Presbytery, through its COM, may authorize the serving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper if the request is initiated by the Session or another governing body.
9. The Commissioned Lay Pastor is serving in an on-going capacity in a church: shall be supervised by the Presbytery through its COM. This supervision shall be provided by the Moderator of the church being served or by a mentor appointed by the COM.

PROCESS FOR COMMISSIONING -

An individual wishing to be commissioned as a Lay Pastor shall make application through their respective Session to the CLP Subcommittee of the COM of Holston Presbytery. The form for this application shall be provided by the Presbytery. (See Appendix A). The COM having satisfied itself regarding the validity of the request, shall supervise the preparation, the examination, and the commissioning of the candidate. Upon completion of the required order of preparation, the COM shall present the candidate to the Presbytery for commissioning as outlined in the Book of Church Order.

WHO MAY BE COMMISSIONED -

Holston Presbytery will accept applications to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor from Elder members of churches in Holston Presbytery. Individuals from another Presbytery may make application through their respective session and with the approval of the COM of their home Presbytery and with the approval of the COM of the Holston Presbytery may participate in the program with the goal of commissioning in their home presbytery.

Individuals from other denominations may make application through their local church's governing body/board and with approval of the COM of Holston Presbytery be enrolled in the program. Non PCUSA participants may be certified as Lay Pastors but shall not be commissioned.

PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS -

Preparation requirements shall consist of four (4) course periods of six (6) to eight (8) weeks duration each. These courses shall normally be held in the Spring and Fall of each year with a complete cycle occurring every two years. Each session of each individual course shall last approximately two and one-half (2½) hours on successive Monday or Tuesday evenings in a locale central to those candidates who enroll. Required subject areas are:

1. Reformed Theology
2. Bible
3. Polity and Pastoral Care
4. Worship Leadership and Sacraments

Successful completion of each requires the following:

1. The attendance and participation by the candidate in a minimum of two-thirds (2/3's) of the class sessions. Class work missed must be made up with and to the satisfaction of the course instructor. Class roll will be taken by the instructor to facilitate this process.
2. The candidate's written (or oral - under special circumstances) answers to

representative questions concerning the course work. These answers shall be evaluated and approved by the instructor at the end of the course period. The instructor shall provide these questions at the first class meeting with the candidates and determine the date for their completion and return. The instructor will provide the COM with a list of those candidates receiving credit for the subject area along with the questions and answers used in the evaluation. These questions and answers will be used in the examination process used for commissioning by the COM.

Upon completion of the preparation course work requirements, the candidate(s) will be examined by the CLP Subcommittee of the COM in the areas of personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the subject areas covered in the course work.

The COM has the right not to proceed with the commissioning of a candidate if all of the requirements are not met in a satisfactory manner. With the guidance of the COM and/or an appointed mentor, the candidate(s) not approved for commissioning shall be asked to prayerfully consider his/her place in the program. He/she shall be asked to perform specific tasks and/or address specific areas of concern that need to be pursued or fulfilled before being re-examined for commissioning as a Lay Pastor.

CONTINUING EDUCATION -

One Continuing Education Event shall be required per year for recertification. This Continuing Education Event shall normally encompass ten (10) contact hours. The COM of Holston Presbytery shall offer a continuing education event each year that will fulfill this requirement. All Commissioned Lay Pastors are encouraged to participate in this event. Other courses, conferences, workshops, or event may be substituted for the scheduled continuing education event with prior approval of the COM.

GENERAL INFORMATION -

Commissioned Lay Pastors are subject to the following requirements and privileges:

1. CLP's may lead worship and preach. A candidate may lead worship/preach only after completion of the Worship Leadership/Sacraments and Polity/Pastoral Care courses and may do so only with the approval of the COM.
2. CLP's may serve the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper when permission for such is requested by the Session of a particular church and granted by the COM. Only Commissioned Lay Pastors who are Elders may serve the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
3. CLP's shall be compensated at no less than seventy-five (75) dollars plus travel expenses (at the standard IRS rate) for worship leadership at each church.
4. A CLP may enter into a covenant relationship with a particular church upon request of that church and upon the approval of the COM. A covenant agreement between the church, the Commissioned Lay Pastor, and the COM shall be drawn up and should follow the example of the temporary supply agreement. (See Appendix B) already in use by the Presbytery. Such an agreement shall ordinarily be for a period of one (1) year with an annual review of the relationship by the COM, the CLP and the church. No covenant relationship should last beyond two years so as to ensure the

participation of the CLP in the life and work of his/her own church. Any exceptions must be requested of and approved by the COM, by the CLP and by the particular church.

5. CLP's must be re-certified on an annual basis. Certification requires:
 - a. The will of the CLP to be re-certified
 - b. The submission of an annual report
 - c. The fulfillment of the continuing education requirement
 - d. Submission of a sermon on an assigned topic or scripture will be required for re-commissioning.
 - e. An annual interview by the COM and the CLP
 - f. The COM's approval
6. CLP's who serve in a continuing relationship with a church field will be provided a mentor, normally the Moderator of the Session, in the church served.
7. CLP's who are serving on a fill-in basis are encouraged to seek a relationship with a minister or fellow lay leader.
8. Must be Re-commissioned by the Presbytery every three (3) years with approval of the COM.
9. CLP's may not administer Baptism, perform marriages or moderate sessions.
10. A CLP who is serving as Temporary Supply the church to which he/she is a member may not be an active member of the Session/Diaconate during the time of his/her CLP relationship with the church.
11. CLP's are responsible to the Presbytery through the COM; who - if it deems just and necessary - may remove the individual from the position of CLP.

Additional Duties for Commissioned Lay Pastors in Particular Churches –

The Presbytery may allow a Commissioned Lay Pastor to perform some or all the functions as stated in G-14.0801c.(1) - (6), when the Presbytery, in consultation with the session and the Committee on Ministry, determines that its strategy for mission in a particular Church requires a Commissioned Lay Pastor to do so.

1. Commissioned Lay Pastors may be able to carry out some or all of the following functions when the Committee on Ministry determines that they are needed to further the mission of a particular church.
 - A. G-14.0801c. (1) Administer the Lord's Supper
 - B. G-14.0801c. (2) Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
 - C. G-14.0801c. (3) Moderate the session of the congregation ***under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery.***
 - D. G-14.0801c. (4) Have a voice in meetings of presbytery
 - E. G-14.0801c. (5) Have a vote in meetings of the presbytery (such vote to be

counted as an elder commissioner for purposes of parity).¹

F. G-14.0801c. (6) Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state.²

2. A Commissioned Lay Pastor may carry out some or all of the functions in part one when the following requirements are met:

- a. the request is initiated by the Session or another governing body, and permission, as well as supervision, is given by the Committee on Ministry.
- b. is an elder.
- c. the Commissioned Lay Pastor has a call to a continuing relationship³ with a particular Church.
- d. has two years experience filling pulpits in the Presbytery.
- e. has completed a second level of training which includes Pre-Baptismal Counseling, Pre-Marital Counseling, Christian Education, Evangelism, Sexual Misconduct, and Moderating the Session.
- f. has signed the Sexual Misconduct Statement on the Personal Information Form at the time of a call to the particular church.
- g. in regard to G-14.0801c.(3), the Commissioned Lay Pastor shall not moderate the Session in which he or she is a member."

STRUCTURE -

The COM of the Presbytery shall administer the Commissioned Lay Pastor Program and its work through its Commissioned Lay Pastor Subcommittee.

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¹ For the purpose of representing a particular church at a meeting of the Presbytery, when two Commissioned Lay Pastors serve in a continuing relationship with a particular church, only one Commissioned Lay Pastor shall be designated as a representative with voice and vote from that particular church

²-item F. only applies to one church of Holston Presbytery in Virginia. It does not apply to Churches of Holston Presbytery in Tennessee until the law changes.

³A continuing relationship is understood to be a minimum of 6 months.