

PROCESS AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR BECOMING A COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER (CRE) IN SAN DIEGO PRESBYTERY

The CRE program honors the principle of the “priesthood of ministry of all believers” by equipping, authorizing, empowering, and commissioning ruling elders for particular ministry contexts.

Under the new Form of Government, G-2.1001. “when the Presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by the state law. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.”

The steps to becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder begin with a council (Session or Presbytery) identifying specific needs and identifying a Ruling Elder who is gifted, competent, and willing to serve and be commissioned by the Presbytery to meet the identified needs.

The council shall notify the Executive Presbyter to consider the identified needs and Ruling Elder proposed for commissioning. The Executive Presbyter will convene the first organizing meeting of a COM – CPM Joint Certification Commission (hereinafter “JCC”), comprised of the chair of Committee on Ministry (COM) or their designee, the chair of Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) or their designee, and two additional members from each of these committees appointed by the respective committees. The Executive Presbyter and Presbytery Stated Clerk shall be *ex-officio* members, voice without vote.

In cases where a previously commissioned CRE seeks a re-commission to another ministry context, the JCC will have the discretion to evaluate the CRE.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR BEING CERTIFIED AS A COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER IN THE PRESBYTERY OF SAN DIEGO

Candidates for certification to be Commissioned Ruling Elders in the Presbytery of San Diego shall be guided by the JCC. The JCC shall approve the educational plans for candidates, including how the educational standards below shall be fulfilled by the candidate, and how the candidate will finance the education. The educational standards are composed of the following:

- Required courses (or their equivalents)
- Cohort Pastoral Group based in the Presbytery
- Field site experience (or related work experience)

Required Courses (or their equivalents)

Candidates shall complete courses in: Old and New Testament Interpretation/Exegesis, Reformed Theology, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, Preaching and Performing the Word (Homiletics), Pastoral Care and Ministry, Presbyterian Polity, Presbyterian Confessions, Basic Bible, Financial Management/Fundraising and Administration for Non-Profits. These courses can be completed through online, face-to-face classroom, hybrid, or special lecture offerings. A candidate shall consult with the JCC in proposing a plan of how these courses will be completed. The JCC shall approve the plan.

Residential Cohort Pastoral Group

The JCC shall arrange to form a residential cohort pastoral group composed of no more than three teaching elders who are minister members in good standing with the Presbytery of San Diego. This cohort group will provide mentoring support to the CRE candidate and shall meet monthly with the candidate to provide a space for action-reflection upon what was learned in the educational courses, field site/work experiences, developing statements of faith, and any other pastoral support that is needed and is appropriate.

Field site experience (or related work experience)

Understanding that candidates are ruling elders of a congregation, while seeking to be certified and commissioned by the presbytery for a specific ministry context, expanding one's experiences and exposure to varied forms of ministry are essential for successful and faithful ministry and service. The JCC will determine with the candidate what type and duration of a field site experience would be beneficial in the training and preparation of a CRE candidate.

THE EXAMINATION BY JCC

The Candidate(s) for CRE will be examined by the JCC after completing these educational requirements. Candidates to be Commissioned Ruling Elders must bring a personal statement of faith and a statement regarding their desire to be a CRE, which will include their experience of faith that led to this request.

If the candidate is approved for service as a CRE, the candidate will complete the current training in sexual misconduct and child and youth protection required by the COM for Teaching Elders/Pastors in the Presbytery. The JCC will require the candidate undergo a background check and a psychological examination. It is recommended that the costs of the background check and psychological examination be shared between the candidate, the presbytery, and the candidate's church of membership. The results of both must be acceptable to the JCC as a condition for the candidate to proceed further in the process. Once these standards are met and the candidate completes the educational training, the JCC will present the candidate to the Presbytery for commissioning. There will be no further examination on the floor of presbytery.

ONGOING TRAINING & REVIEW

Continuing Education/Lifelong Learning

Prior to being certified for commissioning by the Presbytery, the candidate shall work with the JCC to develop a plan for continuing education/lifelong learning for regular vocational and professional development support. This may take the form of continuing education courses, special lectures, retreats, mentoring, or coaching. This continuing education/lifelong learning plan will be sent from the JCC to the COM, which will be tasked to follow-up on an annual basis. The JCC's work will be understood to be completed at this point. The ruling elder commissioned shall work under the supervision of the presbytery, and a minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor pursuant to Form of Government G-2.1003. Within one year of being commissioned, the CRE, in consultation with the COM, shall enroll in a course focused on refining their public speaking.

Review

The CRE and the position will be reviewed annually by the COM, in accordance with G-2.1001 of *The Book of Order*.

**SAN DIEGO PRESBYTERY
COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER APPLICATION**

PART I: APPLICANT INFORMATION AND STATEMENTS

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Congregation of membership _____

When did you join this church _____

When and where were you ordained as a Ruling Elder in the PC(USA):

Describe your present activities in the life & mission of the Church:

Present Employment (Title, nature of work):

Educational Background (School, Graduation Year, Degree, Major/Minor):

Are there any factors you think may limit you to receive training and to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder?

REFERENCES:

In addition to the Pastor and Session of your congregation of membership, you will need to enlist three additional persons who know you well in a variety of relationships (one could be another church member; one, a colleague at work or school; another could be a teacher, friend, etc.) who will serve as individual references.

Name _____ Relationship to applicant _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Name _____ Relationship to applicant _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Name _____ Relationship to applicant _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Statement of Calling:

Please attach to this form your statement on the subject "Why I would like to be involved in the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program.

Statement of Consent:

I hereby apply for admission to the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program of the Presbytery of San Diego. If accepted, I hereby commit myself to participate fully in the scheduled activities and assignments to the best of my ability. I understand that successful completion of the training course, and a background check on both criminal and finance records are necessary before I can be considered for commissioning as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in the Presbytery of San Diego.

SIGNATURE

DATE

You should take your completed form and attached statement to your pastor, or, if your church is without a pastor, to the minister whom presbytery has appointed to moderate your church's session. The minister will talk with you about your interest in the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program. The Session will act on your application.

SAN DIEGO PRESBYTERY
COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER APPLICATION

PART II: SESSION RECOMMENDATION

We, the session of _____, have examined and approved this applicant for the Commissioned Ruling Elder Certification & Commissioning Program of the San Diego Presbytery.

SIGNATURE OF CLERK OF SESSION _____

PRINTED NAME OF CLERK OF SESSION _____

DATE: _____

SAN DIEGO PRESBYTERY
COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER APPLICATION

PART III: PASTOR'S STATEMENT

To be completed by the applicant's pastor or presbytery-appointed moderator of session if applicant's church is without a pastor.

Please furnish your comments pertaining to the areas listed below. Use the reverse side of this sheet or attach additional pages if more space is needed. Your responses will be confidential and will be used only by the JCC in considering this person's application for enrollment in the Commissioned Ruling Elder Training Program.

Christian Commitment and Maturity:

Leadership Ability:

Openness to Ideas and to Learning:

Your Assessment of this Person's Suitability to Serve in this Way:
