

Commissioned Lay Pastor Training Program Begins Soon!

Have you thought about becoming a Commissioned Lay Pastor? Or maybe you know someone who would be a great lay pastor? A CLP (also called Commissioned Ruling Elder, or CRE) is a person who has been trained and certified by the presbytery to serve a congregation with preaching and worship leadership. Once commissioned to a particular church, the CLP may moderate the session, administer the sacraments, and officiate at weddings.

Each presbytery decides how it will train and commission CLPs. The Coordinating Commission has recently adopted a policy draft about training CLPs.

We are now in the first phase of **recruiting a new group of trainees** for the CLP program. **IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, KEEP READING THIS ARTICLE.** Next steps appear at the bottom of the page.

- To be eligible to be commissioned for pastoral service, a person must be a **PCUSA ruling elder in good standing** with gifts and graces for pastoral ministry.
- The process begins when a candidate fills out an **application**. The application will be available soon. This application must be endorsed by the session where the ruling elder currently is a member, and must include references from others who know the candidate well.
- The application will be screened by the **Commission on Preparation for Ministry** (CPM) of Transylvania Presbytery. References will be checked and a background check will be performed. If the application is in order, the candidate will then be asked to meet with the CPM for an interview.
- Pending a **positive outcome of the interview**, the candidate will then be enrolled and brought under care of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry. This care will include ongoing encouragement and contact, including psychological testing which will take place during the first year of the program.

- Once training and testing is completed and the CPM approves a candidate for commissioning, the **Pastoral Transitions Commission (PTC)** will work with candidates and sessions in determining when a church can be served by a CLP and which pastoral tasks are included in each commission.

Candidates will be trained in areas necessary for pastoral leadership, including introductions to both biblical testaments, preaching, Reformed worship and sacraments, pastoral care, Presbyterian polity, Reformed theology, Christian education, and sexual misconduct prevention. This training will take place over two to three years, at events conducted within the presbytery.

Our **first event** will take place in the **fall of 2018**, at a time and place TBD. Beginning with Friday dinner and ending at Sunday noon, this event will gather a maximum of twelve individuals committed to the CLP program, whose applications and interviews have been successful. (There may be space for others who would like to attend the Saturday educational part of the event.)

This weekend event will **focus on community building and group formation**, along with the first educational **module on preaching**, since many candidates are already preaching regularly or occasionally. If needed, we'll help you find someone to preach for you in your congregation that Sunday so we can end our weekend with worship together.

The **cost** has not yet been determined, but there are two important things for you to know: 1) the presbytery has funds to cover nearly all of the cost of training; 2) candidates and sessions will be asked to express their commitment by assuming a small portion of the cost.

Interested? Contact Melissa Bane Sevier at melissa@mbswriting.com or 859-321-3568.