

# ***San Gabriel Presbytery***

2012

SUPPLEMENT TO  
PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY  
ADVISORY HANDBOOK

Pursuant to Section G-3106 Of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (“Book of Order”), in addition to the process and requirements set forth in the Book of Order, Presbytery of San Gabriel adopts the 2011 edition of *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA)* (“AH”) as its statement of the requirements for the inquiry and candidacy phases of preparation for ministry, supplemented and modified as provided below.

The AH may be found at

<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/prep4min/pdfs/handbook.pdf>

## ***Preparation for Ministry Process***

The preparation for ministry process involves two phases: Inquiry and Candidacy. These two phases are designed to explore the call, evaluate the gifts, and support the preparation of men and women who feel themselves called to be teaching elders (G-2.0601). To do this effectively, the

presbytery charges its Committee on Preparation for Ministry - Ministry Team (“CPM”) to work closely with those persons within its congregations who wish to prepare themselves for this ordained office. Since the model for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament is the ministry of Jesus Christ, it is the CPM’s particular responsibility to help these individuals grow toward maturity in Christ. This process normally can and should be done in a timely manner. It shall be terminated if ten years from the date the individual was received as an Inquirer if he or she has not been certified ready to receive a call unless he or she petitions for and CPM grants an extension of that time.

In its role as 'gatekeeper,' CPM must not only discern the individual's initial sense of calling to ordained office, but must concur that his or her sense of calling remains strong. The process of Inquiry and Candidacy is most effective when it reflects the Biblical theme of the covenant relationship described in the AH. That is, when it is both a response to God’s faithfulness and an expression of the concern people have for one another. The process further affirms that all aspects of the church’s life are based upon God’s gracious promises and on the belief that God’s self-giving love undergirds all that the church is and does. Throughout the entire process, all who are involved in the covenant relationship need to approach their tasks with seriousness and diligence, communicating openly and intentionally with each other.

### ***A. Phase 1: Inquiry***

The purpose of Inquiry is to provide opportunities for the church and for those who believe they may be called to the ministry as a teaching elder to explore and test that call together. To make this exploration as effective as possible, a network of caring, supportive relationships is initiated—first, between the Inquirer and the church session, then with the presbytery through its CPM, and with the theological institution. In regular

consultation with CPM, the Inquirer evaluates the personal implications and the suitability of a church occupation, is guided in prayerful examination of his or her motivation, personal faith and experience in the congregation, and makes a serious assessment of the gifts needed by teaching elders comparing them with his or her own gifts. This phase also provides the church with opportunities to respond directly to the Inquirer's questions and concerns.

### ***1. Admission to Inquiry***

A person is considered for enrollment as an Inquirer when he or she approaches the session about the possibility of becoming a minister of the Word and Sacrament and formally agrees with the session and with CPM to explore the implications of this quest. Enrollment is intended to be a thoughtful and deliberate step; people are encouraged to take this formal action soon after they have made their personal decision to explore this ministry so that the CPM can provide them with support and counsel as early as possible. The process and requirements of the inquiry phase can be as follows:

- a. A person desiring to become an Inquirer shall indicate to the session of the particular church a desire to explore the personal implications of becoming a teaching elder.
- b. Unless an exception has been approved by the presbytery (see G-2.0610), the individual must have been "active in the work and worship of [the] congregation for at least six months" and be a member of the congregation before the session presents its endorsement to CPM (G-2.0602).
- c. The session shall contact the CPM for orientation to the process.
- d. The session shall consult with the person and, if the individual requests to be enrolled as an Inquirer, shall make a recommendation to CPM with respect to the request.
- e. After receipt of the recommendation from session but prior to meeting with the CPM, the individual will be given information about receiving Career Counseling and a Psychological evaluation. This counseling is paid

in three parts:  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cost will be paid by the individual;  $\frac{1}{3}$  will be paid by the session; and,  $\frac{1}{3}$  will be paid by San Gabriel Presbytery. After completion a copy of the assessment will be distributed to the CPM members.

f. Upon receipt of the recommendation of the session and the Career Counseling and Psychological assessment, the CPM shall interview the individual. Following the interview the CPM shall determine whether to recommend that presbytery enroll the person as an Inquirer. The date of the presbytery's action to enroll shall be the beginning of the covenant relationship. This period shall be at least two years, at least one year of which shall be as a Candidate (G-2.0602).

g. Promptly after enrollment as an Inquirer the individual shall submit growth objectives and a theological reflection on his or her sense of call.

h. The phase of inquiry shall be of sufficient length for the Inquirer, the session, and the CPM to decide whether the Inquirer should apply to become a Candidate. During this time, CPM shall make use of resources such as information provided by the Inquirer, personal references, and reports from counseling services, the session, and the Inquirer's institution of learning, if the Inquirer is a student.

## ***2. During Inquiry***

When the CPM recommends receiving an individual as an Inquirer they will also select a member of the committee to serve as the Inquirer's liaison to the committee during their tenure as both an Inquirer and Candidate. **It is the Inquirer's/Candidate's responsibility to remain in contact with their liaison.** The Committee recommends that Inquirers and Candidates contact their liaison every month to six weeks.

Before deciding whether to apply for Candidacy, the Inquirer consults at least once a year with the CPM. During each Annual Consultation, the CPM and the Inquirer assess her or his progress toward previously established goals in each of five growth areas (see AH) and together negotiate appropriate new goals.

The Inquirer or Candidate shall submit to CPM an annual written report on progress in studies and service to the church. CPM shall conduct an annual consultation for the evaluation and nurture of the Inquirer or Candidates. In no case shall an Inquirer or Candidate be excused from these annual consultations.

### ***3. Completion of Inquiry***

The Inquiry Phase concludes when the CPM knows the Inquirer well enough to determine whether or not to recommend that the presbytery receive him or her as a Candidate.

### ***4. Expected Outcomes of Inquiry***

By the end of the Inquiry Phase, each Inquirer demonstrates adequate promise for ministry by presenting

- a. a statement of his or her understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition and how it relates to his or her sense of call;
- b. a statement of personal faith which incorporates an understanding of the Reformed tradition;
- c. an analysis of at least one concept from the personal faith statement regarding what it suggests about God, humanity, and their interrelationships;
- d. a statement of what it means to be Presbyterian, indicating how that awareness grows out of participation in the life of a particular church;
- e. a statement of self-understanding which reflects the Inquirer's personal and cultural background and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health;
- f. a statement of his or her understanding of the task teaching elders perform, including an awareness of his or her specific gifts for ministry as a teaching elder and of areas in which growth is needed.

## ***B. Phase 2: Candidacy***

The purpose of this phase is to provide opportunities for support, guidance and evaluation to persons received as Candidates in their preparation for the ministry as a teaching elder (G-2.o604).

It is the responsibility of CPM to create an environment in which the uniqueness of each individual Candidate is taken seriously. As partners in a covenant relationship, both CPM and the Candidate are encouraged to work together as they plan for and evaluate the Candidate's growth and development.

### ***1. Admission to Candidacy***

An Inquirer becomes a Candidate by action of presbytery. At that time the Candidate formally agrees to accept the presbytery's supervision in her or his preparation for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

The process of the Candidacy Phase is as follows:

- a. An Inquirer shall apply to the presbytery through the session of his or her church and CPM to become a Candidate for the office of teaching elder. The session shall confer with the Inquirer, review the evidence of the Inquiry Phase, and make recommendations to the presbytery through CPM with respect to the Inquirer's application.
- b. CPM shall confer with the Inquirer and review the evidence which indicates whether the Inquirer is ready to proceed to candidacy
- c. CPM shall make a definite recommendation to the presbytery with respect to whether the Inquirer should be received as a Candidate. Presbytery shall act on every committee recommendation regarding application for Candidacy.
- d. The presbytery shall receive the report and recommendation of CPM and if the recommendation is to receive the person as a Candidate, presbytery shall examine the Inquirer in person with respect to his or her Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry.

e. If the examination is approved, the presbytery shall receive the Inquirer as a Candidate after the following manner. The moderator shall propose the following questions to the Inquirer:

(1) Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament?

(2) Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?

(3) Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?

(4) Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a Candidate for teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

f. If these questions are answered in the affirmative, a brief charge shall be given, the Candidate's name shall be recorded on the presbytery's roll of Candidates, and the proceedings shall close with prayer.

g. Presbytery may provide, at the request of the Candidate and his or her session, for the service of reception to be conducted by a commission of Presbytery in the presence of the Candidate's congregation.

## ***2. During Candidacy***

The covenant relationship between the Candidate and Presbytery is expressed through the negotiation and review of a series of learning contracts based on the expected outcomes for this phase. In consultations that occur at least once a year, both CPM and the Candidate assess her or his progress toward completion of previously established goals and negotiate appropriate new goals. It is essential that during each consultation the decision be made as to whether Candidacy should be continued, especially if it becomes clear that adequate growth is not taking place.

The presbytery shall require the Inquirer or Candidate to submit an annual written report on progress in studies and service to the church. The

seminary or institution of theological education shall make an annual report on the progress of the Inquirer or Candidate toward preparation for ministry. CPM shall conduct an annual consultation for the evaluation and nurture of the Inquirer or Candidate. In no case shall an Inquirer or Candidate be excused from these annual consultations.

### ***3. Completion of Candidacy***

Candidacy continues until the presbytery acts in one of three ways to remove the Candidate's name from the Roll of Candidates:

a. Completion of the preparation for ministry process with a call to the ministry of teaching elder. In this case, the following steps are involved:

(1) the CPM determines that the Candidate is ready to be examined for ordination;

(2) the Candidate receives a call; and

(3) the Candidate is ordinarily examined, ordained and installed by the presbytery of call.

b. Withdrawal by the Candidate;

c. Removal by the presbytery;

### ***4. Expected Outcomes of Candidacy***

By the end of the candidacy phase, each Candidate to be ordained shall demonstrate readiness to begin the ministry of teaching elder by

a. presenting evidence of satisfactory academic preparation. In order to be certified ready to receive a call, the individual must have taken courses covering the following areas:

1. Reformed Theology and the Book of Confessions;

2. Presbyterian Polity;

3. Presbyterian History and Programs; and

#### 4. Reformed Worship and Sacraments.

Courses must be taken for credit and passed, except that Reformed Theology and the Book of Confessions and Presbyterian Polity may be audited, provided that the individual completes and submits to CPM all written course work which would have been required had the course been taken for credit. If an individual fails a required Theological Competence examination, he or she shall not be permitted to retake it until he or she has taken for credit and passed a course covering Reformed Theology and the Book of Confessions (if he or she has not previously done so); and if an individual fails a required Church Polity examination, he or she shall not be permitted to retake it until he or she has taken for credit and passed a course covering Presbyterian Polity (if he or she has not previously done so).

b. presenting evidence of competence in the fields of Theology, Bible, Polity, and Worship and Sacraments, ordinarily attested by satisfactory completion of applicable ordination examinations; and evidence of ministerial skill attested in the supervised practice of ministry.

1. After an Inquirer or Candidate has failed any part of the ordination examinations twice, the individual will meet with one or more persons designated by CPM to be guided in the particular subject and in examination skills.

2. After guidance the individual will take the examination a third time. If the individual does not then receive a satisfactory grade, CPM will consider whether to recommend to Presbytery that an alternate form of examination be given or that Presbytery end the covenant relationship with the Candidate. In making any such recommendation to Presbytery, the identity of the individual will not be disclosed except that the Moderator of CPM may disclose it privately to any individual Presbyter who states that he or she needs the information in order to vote.

c. presenting evidence of readiness to participate in a calling presbytery's plan for transition and of plans for continuing study and growth, if any;

- d. expressing theological views compatible with the confessional documents of the church;
- e. expressing understanding of the meaning of the questions required for ordination (W-4.4003) informed by knowledge of the church in diverse settings;
- f. revealing commitment to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with personal maturity, spiritual depth, and a capacity to respond to the needs of others, including colleagues in ministry;
- g. presenting a written sermon, together with a description of the contemporary need to which it was addressed and an exegetical interpretation of the biblical material out of which the sermon arose. A DVD of this sermon shall be delivered to CPM prior to its consultation with the Candidate regarding his or her certification of readiness.
- h. presenting evidence that the individual has completed field education and/or an internship which shall be approved by the theological educational institution and which, in the interest of providing a diversity of practical experience, ordinarily should not be the individual's home church.
- i. presenting evidence that the individual has completed a course of clinical pastoral education ("CPE") under the auspices of a supervisor certified by The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE) attached to an ACPE accredited CPE Center or under the requirements of another accreditation agency approved by CPM.

### ***C. Annual Consultations.***

Annual consultations shall be concerned with the spiritual growth and needs of the individual, the financial planning for his or her educational program, and with his or her relation to the church and progress in the program of study leading to ordination for ministry. There shall be a written report in letter form of each consultation, including, as appropriate, a statement of the individual's strengths and areas of needed growth,

prepared by the CPM or its representative. Each report shall be submitted to the individual and the sponsoring session.

1. Any annual consultations for years prior to entering theological education shall include discussion of the Inquirer's preparation for theological growth.

2. The annual consultation for the first year shall include a general assessment of his or her experience and the implications this has for his or her future ministry. The primary focus of this consultation shall not be one of formal examination but of guidance and counseling with the Inquirer. The student may request in writing that at the consultation CPM consider any exemptions permitted by the Book of Order to educational requirements.

3. Subsequent annual consultations shall cover matters similar to those of the consultation for the first year as well as a discussion of progress in preparation for ordination, including a preliminary statement of faith, and a review of all grades, field education reports and other evaluations and examinations.

***D. Requirements to be Certified Ready for Examination for Ordination Pending a Call (G-2.0607)***

To be certified by the presbytery responsible for the Candidate's preparation, each Candidate is required to fulfill the following:

1. demonstration of readiness to begin ministry of the Teaching Elder as required in the Expected Outcomes above;
2. presentation of a diploma and a transcript showing satisfactory grades at a regionally accredited college or university;
3. presentation of a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to CPM. This transcript shall show satisfactory grades and the granting of a diploma, or in lieu of a diploma, presentation of a plan to complete the theological degree (in which case the certification shall be conditioned on the grant of the diploma);

4. presentation of satisfactory grades with the examination papers in the areas covered by the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates.

CPM may require of any Inquirer or Candidate such cooperation, undertakings, consultations, activities, information, reports and other submissions which it may deem desirable in the performance of its responsibilities.

The Candidates are to be reminded of the resources and programs available to them as newly ordained pastors: New Pastors Seminars, Seminary Debt Program, presbytery mentor programs and pastor support groups.

## **Relationship of Documents**

### **Governing Preparation for Ministry**

In the event of conflict between the following documents, they shall control in the following order of priority:

The Book of Order,

This Supplement, and

The AH.

The term "presbytery's committee" used in the AH means CPM.