

So you’re serving on a CPM…

Congratulations and thank you! The process of helping an inquirer / candidate discern a call and prepare for ministry is one of great importance not only to the larger church, but also to the inquirer / candidate. The process intentionally involves many steps in order to be thorough. To help you become familiar with the process, become acquainted with the “Preparation for Ministry” manuals of the denomination and your presbytery so that you are aware of requirements and procedures and can provide timely support (e.g. appearances before presbytery, annual consultations, presbyteries’ cooperative examinations, final assessment, etc.). Also plan to attend state or synod training for CPM members as you are available.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry is concerned with the discernment of an inquirer’s call to ministry and a candidate’s preparation to respond to the call within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Guidance and support for inquirers and candidates are shared by the committee with seminaries, sessions and the presbytery.

The presbytery shall require the inquirer or candidate to make an annual written report concerning progress in studies and service to the church, including a report from the individual’s institution of learning.

The committee on preparation for ministry shall regularly consult with each person on the rolls of inquirers and candidates. The purpose of the consultation shall be for the evaluation and nurture of inquirers and candidates. At least annually the committee shall determine whether to continue or terminate the period of inquiry or candidacy and report this decision to the presbytery.

There shall be a written report of each **regular** consultation, including a statement of the individual’s strengths and areas of needed growth, prepared jointly by the committee or its representative and the inquirer or candidate.

The content of these regular consultations shall include, but need not be limited to, assessment of the inquirer’s or candidate’s development in terms of the outcomes for the appropriate phase. Be aware, this assessment process will make you deeply familiar with the inquirer / candidate’s academic performance, ordination exam results, spiritual and emotional growth, personal growth, financial preparedness, and psychological health (as a matter of engaging the inquirer / candidate, not assessing). Complete confidence is expected.

The primary focus of the first consultation(s) shall not be one of formal examination but of guidance and counseling with the inquirer and candidate. Succeeding consultation(s) shall include a discussion with the individual on requirements and progress in preparation for ordination.

We hope the experience of being an inquirer or candidate is one marked with nurture, care, and thoughtful guidance from the presbytery. Our goals as a committee are both truth-telling in love and pastoral nurture of inquirers and candidates.