Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE)

Policy

of Lake Huron Presbytery

Commissioned Ruling Elder Program
Of Lake Huron Presbytery

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Section I. Role And Purpose Of CRE Program

A. The Reformed tradition holds that every baptized Christian is called to ministry. Christians are called to be active participants in the church's total ministry. This total ministry is nothing less than the exercise of the church's vocation to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ. We are called to embody that ministry in our own time and place through worship, service to others and by proclamation of God's Word to all people.

B. The Presbytery of Lake Huron is aware of the growing need of congregations to have someone who will provide worship leadership, and "watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service." In view of this need and in keeping with the Reformed tradition the Presbytery adopts the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program as described in this document, in accordance with the most recent edition of the Book of Order, Presbyterian Church (USA).

C. The purpose of the Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) Program is to identify, equip, and commission elders of the Lake Huron Presbytery for service in places of need within the Presbytery. The CRE will provide leadership in the areas of worship and preaching, pastoral care and visitation, administration and other areas as requested by the Committee on Ministry and Ministry Preparation (COMMP).

D. CRE's are not ordained ministers. CRE's are commissioned only to a particular congregation or congregations identified by the COMMP and given particular rights and responsibilities in carrying out that commission at the discretion of the COMMP in accordance with those responsibilities allowed by the most recent edition of the Book of Order. A commission is valid for a period of up to three years and may be renewed at expiration. A review of the work of a CRE shall be conducted annually by COMMP and a commission may be terminated at any time at the discretion of Presbytery.

D. The training necessary for a CRE is different from that for an ordained minister and does not require the same level of academic knowledge and training. They will therefore follow a separate track from those seeking ordination. A Ruling Elder's ability to preach, teach, lead worship, extend pastoral care and provide administrative assistance to a local church is cultivated through a course of study and experiential learning designed to enhance their spiritual gifts in these areas. Consequently, competency in the exercise of spiritual gifts, more than the acquisition of seminary credentials, forms the basis for commissioning. This competency is to be understood in light of the place of local commissioning and not of the whole church. To further the development of these gifts for service in a particular field, the Presbytery will provide required training as outlined below.

E. This discernment of an individual's competency in the exercise of spiritual gifts as a CRE is to be understood as only beginning with the successful fulfillment of the course of study and training as outlined below. Completion of the required training does not guarantee that a person will be commissioned.

Section II. Overview Of CRE Training Program

A. The CRE training program is a multi-year program (approximately 2 ½ - 3 years) with three levels of training as follows:

Level 1 - Preparation for Preaching Elder
Level 2 - Preparation for Commissioned Lay Pastor
Level 3 – Season of Practical Discernment

B. The CRE program is an investment by Lake Huron Presbytery in future leadership for small churches and as such the costs of this program will be shared by Presbytery and not solely by the students. The students are expected to commit their time to the training and to cover $250 a year of educational expenses.

C. Level 1 Training (Preparation for Preaching Elder) will be open to any elder who is a member of Lake Huron Presbytery. An endorsement from the elder's current pastor is required.

D. The Level 1 curriculum will include a yearlong in-depth Bible study rooted in the Reformed tradition including exegesis, hermeneutics, homiletics and worship. Students will have several opportunities to practice their preparation and delivery of sermons. The expectation is that graduates of the Level 1 Training will be able to pass a Bible content exam, exegete scripture, plan a worship service, and develop and deliver a quality sermon. A successful graduate of the Level 1 Training (or equivalent training as discerned by COMMP) would be available for pulpit supply in the Presbytery.

E. An elder who has successfully completed the Level 1 Training and is interested in becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder would then complete the process to enter into the Level 2 Training program. This process includes 1) obtaining the endorsement of his/her session, 2) getting a letter of recommendation from his/her pastor, 3) providing two other letters of recommendation, and 4) arranging an interview with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Team (CPM) which must also give its approval for a student to continue in the training program.

F. The Level 2 Training Program is a process of instruction and of discernment. Part of the discernment process at the beginning of year two includes an evaluation by a psychologist engaged by the Presbytery. Results of the psychological evaluation will only be discussed with the CPM team members. In addition, throughout the year of the Level 2 Training the student along with the student's session, and the CPM will discern through prayer, classroom achievement, and personal growth God's call to the student to serve as a CRE. CRE students must be willing to accept the care and guidance of Presbytery in their course of study and practical training in preparation for commissioning.

G. The second year of training will focus on the topics required for CRE training by the Book of Order. The curriculum in the second year will include, but not be limited to Pastoral Care, Bible Study, Administration and Polity, the Book of Confessions, Funerals and Weddings, Boundaries and Difficult people, Stewardship and Active Listening.

H. In the third year, students will put into practice what they have learned through a ministry placement supervised by a Minister of Word and Sacrament. This placement should be individually tailored to the needs of each student as determined by the COMMP. In addition, the COMMP may require that a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) be taken as part of the preparation for becoming a CRE. At the end of their practical training, students will prepare a written summary of their experiences for the Committee along with a written report from their supervising Minister of Word and Sacrament.

I. The placement and CPE training (if required) will ordinarily occur after the end of the second year of online training. The placement and/or CPE training, however, could start earlier during the latter half of the second year with the permission of the COMMP. If this is the case, then the practical portion of Level 3 Training will overlap with the classroom instruction.

J. Once the Level 3 Training (Both Year 2 Instructional and Year 3 Practical Training) has been successfully completed, a CRE candidate will be examined to determine if he/she is ready to receive a 3 year commission contract. The procedures for the examination process are described in Section VII. Upon successful completion of the examination process, a graduate of the Level 3 Training would be designated as a “Commissioned Ruling Elder” ready to receive a commission at the recommendation of COMMP and approval of Presbytery.

Section III. <u>Administration Of The CRE Program</u>

A. Organization:

1. The CRE program will be overseen by the COMMP through the subcommittee of CPM.

Section IV. <u>Qualification Requirements and Entry Process</u>

A. Requirements for Level 1 Training

1. Applications will be accepted from any person who is an elder in a PCUSA congregation in the Lake Huron Presbytery.
2. Applicants shall have no less than an associate college degree program, or have equivalent work experience. The CPM has the responsibility for determining what constitutes “equivalent work experience.”
3. The applicant must fill out the application form and set up an interview with his/her pastor and a COMMP member.
4. The applicant will obtain an endorsement from his/her pastor. In the event there is no current pastor at the church the endorsement can come from the clerk of session.
5. The applicant will write a statement of faith.
6. The completed application form along with a $50.00 non-refundable application fee is sent to the Presbytery Office to the attention of the CRE Training.

B. Requirements for Level 2 Training (Second Year)

1) Satisfactorily complete Level 1 Training
2) Get endorsement of session (see Appendix 6)
3) Letter of recommendation from Pastor
4) Two other letters of recommendation (members of Lake Huron Presbytery)
5) Interview with the COMMP
6) Take psychological testing within 90 days of entrance to Level 2 training
7) Complete Application Form (Appendix 5)
8) Update statement of Faith

B. Requirements for Level 3 Training (Third Year)

1. Submit updated Level 2 application (Appendix 5). (It will not be necessary to update the letters of recommendation and the session endorsement.)
2. Obtain endorsement of COMMP to continue in the process following an annual review at end of Year 2 training

C. The application forms and all proceedings concerning the application process are to be considered personal and confidential and are not to be disclosed to unauthorized persons.

D. An applicant to the CRE program enters into a covenant with the COMMP and agrees to abide by its decisions and processes. An applicant also commits to participate fully in the scheduled activities and assignments – both academic and practical.

Section V. CRE Training Program

A. The Book of Order requires that
A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. Such preparation shall include a certificate of completion of boundary training, which includes the topic of sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse prevention training with recertification at least every thirty-six months. The presbytery shall determine which trainings are approved to meet the criteria of these two requirements. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.

B. Biblical instruction for CRE training will be done through the Union Presbyterian Seminary Online program. Preaching and Homiletic instruction will be done through Alma College. Worship and Sacrament training, Funeral and Wedding instructions will be arranged with minister members of the Lake Huron Presbytery. Training sessions may also be combined and held as an overnight training event. COMMP will decide the actual schedule and location of the training sessions to best fit the needs of the students and instructors. This schedule will be prepared before the beginning of the training so that the students can schedule their times accordingly.

C. The CRE program is an investment by Lake Huron Presbytery in future leadership for small churches and as such most of the costs of this program should be shared by Presbytery and sponsoring church- not just the students. The students are expected to commit to 1/3 of the total cost of education expenses.

D. The first year curriculum will include an online biblical and theological courses from Union Presbyterian Seminary, a Homiletic course from Alma College. In addition there will be Worship and Sacrament training, Funeral and Wedding instructions will be arranged with minister members of the Lake Huron Presbytery.

E. Instructors for the Level 1 Worship preparation sessions will be recruited from within the Presbytery. This has been done by the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery in the past.

F. The second year curriculum will include:

Pastoral Care, Bible Study, Administration and Polity, the Book of Confessions, Funerals and Weddings, Boundaries and Dealing Difficult people, Stewardship and Active Listening. These courses will be complete with a combination of Presbytery member led sessions and Online Courses at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

G. It is recommended that instructors for the Level 2 sessions be recruited from within the Presbytery. The COMMP, however, has the option of recruiting instructors from outside the Presbytery and/or from seminaries if it deems appropriate.

H. The third year of training will be an opportunity to put into practice what the students have learned. Each student will be expected to complete a supervised placement. The placement would be evaluated during and after a year. Upon satisfactory review a 3 year contract may be drawn up and approved by COMMP

I. The COMMP, if it determines that it is appropriate, can require a CRE student to take CPE as part of the third year practical training. The costs of the CPE training (approximately $250) are the responsibility of the CRE student. If this is a burden, then financial aid may be requested from the CRE student's home church and/or from Presbytery.

Section VII. Commissioning Process

A. Upon completion of the preparation course work requirements, the CRE candidate will be examined in the areas of personal faith, motives for seeking the commission and the subject areas covered in the course work. In preparation for this examination the candidate will prepare an updated statement of faith and complete the form in Appendix 8.

B. The examination committee shall review the records of the CRE candidate in the required subjects of instruction to determine the need (if any) for additional training prior to recommending commissioning.

C. The examining committee shall make a specific determination concerning the CRE candidate's request for commissioning. The decision shall be one of the following:
   1. To recommend to the Presbytery for commissioning;
   2. To require additional training and experience;
   3. To decide against commissioning and request the CRE candidate's resignation from the CRE Program. Such a decision shall be communicated personally by the examination committee and in writing as well. Information copies of the written denial of commissioning should also be sent to the moderator and Session of the congregation in which the applicant holds active membership.

D. The examining committee 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 COMMP, a candidate 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 CRE.

E. The COMMP has the responsibility for matching a CRE with a congregation. Normally, a CRE shall not serve in the church of his/her membership. However, COMMP may grant an exception to this, subject to annual review. Presbytery has the authority to commission a CRE. The COMMP shall recommend to Presbytery the commissioning of a CRE to a specific church for a specific time and offer a written description of the CRE's duties and compensation. A sample covenant agreement between a CRE and church is given in Appendix 10.

F. The compensation for a CRE shall be established by written agreement between the CRE, the session(s) of the church(es) served, and the COMMP. The amount of compensation shall depend on workload, time involved, and travel necessary. It is recommended that COMMP use the Presbytery minimum cash salary and housing (without medical & pension dues) as the basis for setting the minimum compensation for a CRE while taking into account the hours served (part time nature of position) and the church's ability to pay. Voluntary service by the CRE may be part of the compensation package, but should be indicated as such.

G. The commissioning service shall ordinarily be conducted at a meeting of the Presbytery. The Presbytery may vote to appoint a commission to act on its behalf in the commissioning service of the CRE candidate during a worship service of the congregation in which the CRE will serve. The actual commissioning service shall include the specific requirements specified in the Book of Order G-14.0516.

Section VIII. Mentoring And COMMP Supervision Of CRE

A. The COMMP appoints a Mentor at the time a CRE is commissioned. To satisfy the Book of Order requirement for a Minster of the Word and Sacrament to serve as CRE mentor, the Presbytery will appoint one of its minister members to serve as the CRE Mentor for the Presbytery. This person will also encourage relationships between our CREs.

B. Some qualifications in selecting a mentor include:
   1. The Mentor ought to be a good role model for the CRE
   2. The Mentor should be someone who is approachable and non-judgmental – able to truly listen to the concerns of the CRE and give advice

C. The COMMP shall also consult with the CRE concerning his/her desire to continue in the current assignment. Any serious problems that have emerged during the present commission relationship will be fully discussed with the appropriate parties and an attempt made to resolve these if possible. If this does not seem likely to be successful, the COMMP may recommend the termination of the existing relationship.

D. A CRE who is performing satisfactorily and whose commissioned status is recommended for continuation by all parties, shall be recommended to the Presbytery for renewal of his/her commission for a period of time not to exceed three years, subject to continuing satisfactory performance and ongoing active participation in a plan for continuing education approved by the COMMP.

Section IX. Other

A. A student in the CRE training program can voluntarily withdraw from the training process at any time by sending a written resignation notice to the COMMP. If a student who has withdrawn from the program chooses to reenter into a later CRE training program, he/she can receive credit for the portion of the training already completed. The CPM will determine the training modules necessary to complete the requirements. The CPM has the option of requiring a student to repeat portions of the training program (or even the entire training program) if the CPM feels that is most appropriate.

B. A CRE transferring from another Presbytery or someone who has CRE training from another Presbytery will need to meet with the COMMP to review if their past training and experience will meet Lake Huron Presbytery's requirements. COMMP will make a recommendation how to satisfactorily meet the requirements of Lake Huron Presbytery if it determines that the past training is inadequate or incomplete. Once again the COMMP has the option of requiring a student to repeat portions of the training program (or even the entire training program) if the COMMP feels that is most appropriate. Once the COMMP has determined that the training requirements have been satisfactorily met then the CRE applicant would be examined for readiness to receive a commission under the procedures in Section VII.

Appendix 1
Information Packet and Overview of CRE Program

This information package is being sent to you to provide an overview of the CRE program for Lake Huron Presbytery. This overview answers some key questions. For more details you are referred to actual CRE policy.

What is a Commissioned Ruling Elder?
A Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) is an elder who is trained and commissioned by the Presbytery to provide pastoral services to a particular church or churches. The relevant section of the Book of Order covering CREs is G-14.0801.

What do Commissioned Ruling Elders do?
This can vary greatly depending on what a person is equipped to do and what Presbytery authorizes. The Book of Order says that a CRE may be authorized to:

a. Administer the Lord's Supper
b. Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
c. Moderate the session of the congregation
d. Have a voice & vote in Presbytery meetings
e. Have a vote in meetings of Presbytery
f. Perform a service of Christian marriage if allowed by the state

Are Commissioned Ruling Elders automatically authorized to do those things when they are commissioned?
No. Each Presbytery decides what to authorize for each CRE for each commission after consulting with the session of the church involved and determining whether the particular lay pastor is ready, able, and willing to take on these activities. The authorization is only for the particular church to which the CRE is commissioned.

How does a person become a Commissioned Ruling Elder?
An interested person must be an ordained elder of PCUSA and a member of a congregation in Lake Huron Presbytery. The interested person should contact COMMP and talk with his/her pastor and session about CRE ministry. Next an interested person applies to the Presbytery by filling out the required application form and if accepted enters into the training program. Upon completion of the required training program a CRE candidate is examined on his/her faith, motives, and knowledge and is certified ready to receive a commission. Committee on Ministry and Ministry Preparation (COMMP) has the responsibility to match CRE candidates with churches and brings a recommendation to Presbytery to commission a CRE candidate to a particular church. COMMP also assigns a mentor to a CRE and maintains oversight of the CRE commission.

What training is required to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder?
Presbytery has established a training program to prepare elders to become CRE and meet the training requirements spelled out in the Book of Order. The training necessary for a CRE is different from that for an ordained minister and does not require the same level of academic knowledge and training. A lay person's ability to preach, teach, lead worship, extend pastoral care and provide administrative assistance to a local church is cultivated through a course of study and experiential learning designed to enhance their spiritual gifts in these areas.

Lake Huron Presbytery's CRE training program is a multi-year program (approximately 2½ - 3 years) with two levels of training as follows:

Level 1 - Preparation for Preaching Elder
Level 2 - Preparation for Commissioned Ruling Elder
Level 3 – Season of Practical Discernment

The COMMP administers the program. For more details on the entrance requirements and course content you are referred to the CRE Policy.

How long does a CRE serve a church?
A commission may be for as long as 3 years and then must be renewed or terminated. While serving a commission a CRE is under the supervision of the COMMP and must have an annual review.

Is the CRE paid?
Some CREs may be financially able to serve as volunteers, but most are paid in proportion to the time and effort expended in the service they provide. The actual terms of compensation are worked out by the CRE, the involved church, and COMMP.

Appendix 2
Presbytery of Lake Huron Application Packet for Level 1 Training
(Biblical Studies and Preaching)

Level 1 Training Entrance Requirements Checklist: Ordained
Elder of PCUSA
Member of a church in the Presbytery of Lake Huron
Associate Degree (or Higher) or Equivalent Work Experience

J. Desire to preach and learn more about God's word in the Bible Commitment to attend online classes which include online biblical and theological courses from Union Presbyterian Seminary, a Homiletic course from Alma College. In addition, there will be Worship and Sacrament training, Funeral and Wedding instructions will be arranged with minister members of the Lake Huron Presbytery.

Your pastor's endorsement (see Appendix 3 for form)
This application completed and returned along with $50 application fee

Level 1 Training is a one-year program of Bible study and instruction on how to prepare and deliver a sermon as well as worship leadership. This training prepares one to become a Preaching Elder and is the first step in the training required to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor. It should be understood that successful completion of Level 1 training does not guarantee one's entrance into the Level 2 Training program.

Application Procedure:

1. You must be an elder of the PCUSA and a member of a Presbyterian church in Lake Huron Presbytery to enter into this training program.

2. Contact you pastor and the COMMP to set up a meeting to discuss the expectations and obligations of this training program. In the event that your church does not currently have a Pastor, the meeting can be held with the Clerk of Session.

3. Have your pastor (or Clerk of Session if your church is without a Pastor) complete the Pastor's endorsement form.

4. Complete the application form and return it to the Presbytery Office at the address given below along with a $50.00 non-refundable fee.

5. The COMMP will review the application and inform you if you qualify.

Appendix 2

Commissioned Ruling Elder Level 1 Training Application

Name _____ Date _____

Address: _____
Street / Apt

_____
City/State/ Zip

E-mail_____ Phone _____(H) _____(W)

Church of Current Membership _____ (City) _____
(Church Name)

Year you joined this Church _____

Total length of membership in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) _____

Year of Ordination as Elder* _____ What Church?_____

(* You must be an elder to be commissioned as a Lay Pastor)

Educational Background**:** (List your high school and any further formal education you may have received. Begin with your most recent educational experience)

School and Location Graduation Year Degree Major/Minor

_____

_____

_____

_____

Present Employment (Title, Nature of Work) _____

_____

_____

Briefly list your work history:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

On a separate paper please respond to the following questions:

Give a brief (300-600 word) description of your faith story.

What are the current and past ways you have served God in your local church?

What service have you provided to Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly?

Describe your Bible study and prayer life practices.

Why would you like to move from learning about the Bible to preaching about the Bible?

Statement of Commitment:

I hereby apply for admission to the Level 1 CRE Training Program of the Presbytery of Lake Huron. If accepted, I commit myself to participate fully in the scheduled activities and assignments.

Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix 3
Pastor's Endorsement Form for Level 1 CRE Training

(To be completed by the applicant's pastor or clerk of session if the 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 page(s) if more space is needed. Your responses will be confidential and will be used only by the COMMP in considering this person for enrollment in the training for Preaching Elder.

Christian Commitment and Maturity:

Leadership Ability:

Openness to Ideas and Learning:

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

Other Comments You Wish To Add:

Signature_____ Date:_____

Please mail this completed form to: **Commissioned Ruling Elder Training Program**
Presbytery of Lake Huron
P.O. Box 6129
Saginaw, MI 48608-6129

Appendix 4
Presbytery of Lake Huron Application Packet for Level 2 Training
(Commissioned Ruling Elder)

Level 2 Training Entrance Requirements Checklist:

Ordained Elder of PCUSA
Member of a church in the Presbytery of Lake Huron
Associate Degree (or Higher) or Equivalent Work Experience
Successful Completion of Level 1 Training Program
Commitment to attend online classes including Pastoral Care, Bible Study, Administration and Polity, the Book of Confessions, Funerals and Weddings, Boundaries and Dealing Difficult people, Stewardship and Active Listening. These courses will be complete with a combination of Presbytery member led sessions and Online Courses at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

Session Endorsement
Pastor's letter of recommendation
Two other letters of recommendation
Statement of faith
This application completed and returned along with $50 application fee to the Presbytery Office to the attention of the Commissioned Ruling Elder Training .

Level 2 Training is approximately a 1 - 2 year training program combining classroom instruction with practical experience. The classroom instruction will occur during the first year. Each CRE student will be expected to complete a supervised internship that may begin whenever the COMMP deems appropriate. Ordinarily this would occur during the second year of the Level 2 Training - after the yearlong classroom instruction. In addition to the supervised placement the COMMP may require a CRE student to complete CPE training as part of the Level 2 training.

The Level 2 Training is also a time for discernment of a CRE student's call to ministry. A psychological exam completed within 90 days of entering into the Level 2 program is required as part of this discernment process. A CRE student will have opportunities to meet with the CPM during the Level 2 Training to prayerfully work together to discern his/her call to continue in the CRE program.

Upon completion of the Level 2 training a CRE student will be examined to determine if he/she is ready to receive a commission. It should be understood that completion of the Level 2 Training program does not guarantee that a student will be commissioned as a CRE.

Appendix 4
Application Form for Level 2 CRE Training Program

Name _____ Date _____

Address: _____
Street / Apt

_____
City/State/ Zip

E-mail_____ Phone _____(H) _____(W)

Church of Current Membership _____ (City) _____
(Church Name)

Year You Joined this Church _____

Total length of membership in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) _____

Year of Ordination as Elder* _____ What Church?_____

(* You must be an elder to be commissioned as a lay pastor)

Are you a deacon? [ ] No [ ] Yes – Ordained (Year) _____

List areas of service performed/held in local congregation with years of service:

_____
_____
_____
_____

List areas of service/offices performed/held in Presbytery and/or Synod:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Membership and experiences in churches of other Denominations:

_____
_____
_____
_____

List areas of service to your community, or communities where you have lived:

Present Employment (Title, Nature of Work)

Briefly list your work history:

Educational Background: (List your high school and any further formal education you may have received. Begin with your most recent educational experience)

School and Location	Graduation Year	Degree	Major/Minor

Additional Learning Experiences brought to this program (travel, conferences, training events, leadership situations)

Previous Lay Pastor Training and/or Commission (when & where)

Limits: What factors may place limits on your ability to receive training and to serve as a Commissioned Lay Pastor (such as physical disability, family situation, employment status, etc.?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

On Separate Pieces of Paper Please Provide A Brief Response (A Paragraph or Two) To The Following Questions:

- Why are you interested in becoming a Commissioned Lay Pastor?
- What gifts and talents do you have which will help you become an effective Commissioned Lay Pastor?
- What areas of strength have you discovered since your enrollment in Level 1 and what areas of need for growth and development have you discovered?
- What does it mean to you to be Presbyterian?
- Please write a 300-600-word description of your faith story. It should include how your faith has influenced your life and how you see yourself being called to participate in this program.
- Write a brief personal statement of your faith (I believe …). The statement should be no more than one typewritten page and should include your understanding of the following:
  a) The Trinity (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit
  b) The Bible
  c) The Sacraments of the Lord Supper and Baptism
  d) The life and mission of the church

References:

In addition to your minister and Session you will need to enlist two additional persons who know you well in a variety of relationships and who will serve as an Individual Reference for you. Please arrange to have these Individual References send a letter of recommendation to: Commissioned Ruling Elder Training, Presbytery of Lake Huron, P.O. Box 6129, Saginaw, MI, 48608-6129)

List below the persons who will be your Individual References

Name Address City, State, Zip

1. _____

2. _____

Statement of Commitment:

I hereby apply for admission to the Commissioned Ruling Elder Level 2 Training Program of the Presbytery of Lake Huron. If accepted, I commit myself to participate fully in the scheduled activities and assignments. I understand I will be undertaking a commitment of both academic and practical nature. I also understand that successful completion of this training course is necessary before I can be considered for commissioning as a Ruling Elder. I am also willing to commit myself to continuing education (in consultation with COMMP) after completing the program to maintain commissioning.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

CRE Applicant

We the session of _____ Presbyterian Church have examined and endorsed this applicant for the Commissioned Ruling Elder Training Program of Lake Huron Presbytery.

_____Clerk of Session Date: _____

Appendix 5

Cover Letter for Session Endorsement for Level 2 Training Commissioned Ruling Elder Training Program

_____ (name of applicant) who is a member of your congregation has applied for training as a Commissioned Ruling Elder. This information packet is being sent to you so that the Session may know what is expected of it. The information packet includes a copy of the current policy on Commissioned Ruling Elders for the Lake Huron Presbytery as well as copies of the application forms, which have also been sent to the applicant. We hope that this packet will help to answer questions the Session may have of the program.

Before the Presbytery reviews the application, the Session must endorse it and agree to support the person as he/she participates in the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program. Endorsement by the Session means that the Session has reviewed the CRE applicant's form, examined the person with regard to their motives for seeking this ministry, and has been made fully aware that the person intends to enroll in the CRE program and seek a commission as a CRE. The Session, in its endorsement, agrees to be supportive of the person's application and agrees to support the applicant's ministry as a CRE. Such support may be in the form of prayer, financial aid, or other forms of help.

Application Procedures:

1. The session or representative from session of the applicant's home church requests a meeting with a representative of the COMMP to discuss the CRE training process.

2. Once the CRE applicant has completed the application forms, the applicant requests a meeting with the Session in order that the session may review the application forms and to examine the applicant's motives for seeking this ministry.

3. The completed and signed application is approved by the Session and dated and signed by the Clerk of Session. Please note that the applicant must receive endorsement from his/her session and must be an elder.

4. The applicant returns the completed application and a $50.00 non-refundable application fee to the Presbytery Office to the attention of the CRE Training Program.

5. The COMMP reviews the application and then interviews the applicant to determine if he/she is qualified to continue in Level 2 Training.

Appendix 6
Form to be Filled Out in Preparation for Examination to be Certified

On a separate piece of paper please answer the following questions:

1. Why are you interested in becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder? Describe your call to pursue becoming a CRE.

2. What gifts or talents do you have which will help you become a CRE? What would someone who knows you well say are your chief strengths and areas of giftedness? Of need for growth?

3. What excites you about serving God in a local church as CRE?

4. What concerns you about the prospect of serving God as a CRE?

5. What does it mean to you to be Presbyterian?

6. Briefly describe your spiritual disciplines, including your participation in the worship and mission of a Presbyterian congregation.

7. Describe your relationship with your peers, authority figures, family, and others who are significant to you. What are the implications of those relationships for your ministry?

8. Describe recent experiences of emotional impact, if any, and how you dealt with them.

9. Describe educational or other experiences in the recent past other than the CRE training program that contributed to your personal/professional development.

10. Comment on how the CRE Training Program has or has not prepared you for becoming a CRE.

11. Comment on areas in which you believe you are growing and identify areas in which you feel a need for further growth.

In addition to the above please write a personal statement of faith which will be no more than one typewritten page covering your understanding of the following: a) The Trinity (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit); b) The Bible; c) The Sacraments of the Lord's Supper and Baptism; d) The life and mission of the church.

Please send your completed answers to the COMMP at least two weeks prior to your scheduled examination for certification as ready to receive a commission.

Appendix 7
Covenant with Commissioned Ruing Elder

Name of Church*:* _____

Name of CRE: _____

Service from _____ **To** _____

Review of this covenant prior to renewal or termination will be by the session and the COMMP.

This relationship may be terminated prior to expiration with _____ days notice by either party and the concurrence of the COMMP.

Responsibilities of CRE (Check those that apply to your situation)

Lead worship and preach _____ times each month

Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Administer the Sacrament of Baptism

Moderate Session Meetings

Perform Marriages (State law must allow)

Other Duties: _____
_____

Time Expectations (per week) _____

Specific Days in Ministry (if applicable) _____
Compensation (as applicable)

Cash Salary: _____ / week, month (circle)

Medical Coverage _____

Social Security withheld _____

Travel Reimbursement @ $0._____ per mile

Other Ministry Cost Reimbursement (Telephone, etc) _____

Continuing Education or Book Allowance _____

Other: _____
_____

Housing Arrangements in the community _____
_____

Vacation Time _____

Continuing Education Time _____

_____ _____

Commissioned Ruling Elder Clerk of Session

_____ _____

Presbytery COMMP Moderator of Session

Date of Session Action: _____