



# Preparation for Ministry as a Commissioned Ruling Elder Pastor in The Presbytery of Donegal

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## Requirements to Enter the Commissioner Ruling Elder (CRE) Training Process

- Membership in a Presbytery of Donegal Congregation for at least 6 months
- Ordination as a Ruling Elder PCUSA or a session plan for ordination as a Ruling Elder
- At least an Associate Degree or commensurate training in a professional credentialing program (there may be exception for high school diploma plus substantive work experience)
- Application
- Preliminary Statement of Faith
- Faith Journey Biography
- Demonstration of sufficient maturity, evidence of Christian character, speaking ability, and leadership competencies for service as a commissioned pastor
- 3 Written References
- Session Endorsement
- State Mandated Clearances and Background Check
- Transcript for all education beyond high school

## Academic Course Preparation

Courses covering the following content are required. Different training programs organize this content in various combinations, so the list of required courses will be personalized for each person in the preparation process.

1. **Introduction to the Old Testament**
2. **Introduction to the New Testament**
3. At least one **Preaching Course** covering:
  - a. Biblical Exegesis (Interpretation)
  - b. Sermon Construction
  - c. Sermon Delivery (Homiletics)
4. **PCUSA Polity** (course offered “on-demand” by the Presbytery of Donegal. Substitution of a different Polity Class requires prior approval.)
5. **Reformed Theology**
6. **Reformed Worship and Sacraments** - including practical training to officiate the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, funerals, worship leadership, the Liturgical Year
7. **Foundations of Learning/Christian Education** (course offered “on-demand” by the Presbytery of Donegal. Substitution of a different Educational Methodology Class requires prior approval.)

8. **Pastoral Care**
9. **Mission/Evangelism**
10. **Stewardship/Church Leadership and Administration** (course offered “on-demand” by the Presbytery of Donegal. Substitution of a different Educational Methodology Class requires prior approval.)
11. **The Presbytery of Donegal/The Synod of the Trinity/Understanding the PCUSA** (conducted by the Presbytery of Donegal – orientation to the Presbytery Mission Priorities, Stewardship process, and connections to the Synod and the PCUSA)

## Other Preparation Requirements

- **Boundary Training** – Mandatory; Daylong training offered periodically by the Presbytery of Donegal
- **Mentoring Process** – Faithful participation in mentoring process with COM-assigned mentor.
- **Field Education** – Mandatory; 160 hours supervised service in a congregation/s in the Presbytery of Donegal. The second 80 hours may potentially be completed in the home church of the trainee, upon evaluation by COM.
  - May be up to 20 hours per week or as few as 4 hours per week
  - Compensation may be included by the congregation of service, but is not required
  - Must include at least 4 pulpit experiences, attendance at least 2 session meetings, at least 4 teaching experiences, pastoral care experiences, training in the church’s stewardship/administration process
- **Training to Officiate Weddings** – Optional to become a CRE, Mandatory for the commission to include officiating at weddings; Prepare/Enrich Certification, or other approved marital preparation program
- **Vocational/Psychological Assessment** –Mandatory for those who would be seeking at least half-time appointment as a CRE Pastor, normally through the Samaritan Counseling Center of Lancaster. Costs to be shared by the trainee and home congregation, with some financial assistance from the presbytery on a case by case basis.

## Service as a CRE Student Pastor

- In order to approve a CRE Pastor trainee for service as a student pastor, the following requirements must be satisfied:
  - Completion of these core courses: Reformed Theology, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, either Old Testament or New Testament introduction, Preaching, PC(USA) Polity
  - Vocational/Psychological Assessment
  - Submission of Faith Journey Biography, Statement of Faith, and Sermon (as described in the Examination Process section)
  - Updated Clearances

- Service as a CRE Student Pastor may satisfy the Field Education requirement. See the Field Education section for other Field Education stipulations.

## Examination Process

The CRE Candidate must submit:

- **Statement of Faith**, following the Presbytery of Donegal Faith Statement Guidelines
- **Updated Faith Journey Biography**
- **Sermon** including:
  - Written Exegesis (5-10 pages)
  - Sermon Manuscript
  - Sermon Delivery Video
  - Complete Worship Service, including liturgy, prayers, message for younger worshipers
- **Written Examination** administered by the Presbytery of Donegal
- **Updated Clearances**, as needed

Once the written materials are approved, the CRE candidate will be invited to a meeting for examination with the Presbytery of Donegal Connecting Our Ministry Commission (COM).