

Calling a Commissioned Pastor Procedures

Commissioned Pastor Requirements

EPC Presbytery of the Pacific NW

When a Session determines that an individual in their congregation is called to specialized ministry or determines that the church is unable to call a Minister of the Word due to financial or other circumstances, the Session may determine to utilize the role of 'Commissioned Pastor.' Such utilization must take place in conjunction with the approval of Presbytery. Our Book of Order provides the following guidelines:

From The BOG 9-11: This is the starting point

The Ruling Elder as a Commissioned Pastor A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals, and provide pastoral care. Presbyteries may also approve and give appropriate powers to a Ruling Elder to serve as a Commissioned Pastor in mission churches, church planting and church revitalization works, or in chaplaincy positions in hospitals, hospices, prisons, or other institutions.

- A. Authorization shall be for a term up to three years and may be renewed.**
Such authorization shall specify those powers granted and shall stipulate in which church(es) or ministry contexts those powers are authorized. Such powers shall be exercised only in those contexts.
- B. Potential Commissioned Pastors shall be examined by Presbytery and found to have sufficient knowledge in the areas in which they will be serving.**
- C. A Ruling Elder previously commissioned as a lay pastor by another Reformed body may become a Commissioned Pastor as deemed appropriate by the Presbytery and subject to the same requirements of the EPC Commissioned Pastor.⁶⁴**
- D. Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder to each Commissioned Pastor as supervisor to act as mentor and to assist the Commissioned Pastor in writing an annual report to Presbytery.**
- E. Presbytery may terminate the authorization to serve as a Commissioned Pastor at any time prior to the expiration of the commission**
- F. Upon authorization of a Commissioned Pastor, Presbytery shall administer the vows of commissioning below either immediately or through an administrative commission at a designated time.**

1. Do you now reaffirm the vows you took upon your ordination as a Ruling Elder, and do you recommit yourself to them in the discharge of your obligations as a Commissioned Pastor?
2. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account?
3. Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as Commissioned Pastor whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before this congregation of which God will make you an officer?
4. Are you now willing to take responsibility in the life of this congregation/in this ministry as a Commissioned Pastor, and will you seek to discharge your duties relying upon the grace of God, in such a way that the entire Church of Jesus Christ will be blessed?

Different situations that a Commissioned Pastor could be called

1. The calling Church Session identifies a ruling Elder within their congregation that they believe is called to be a Commissioned Pastor for that church.
 - a. The Session initiates the call while keeping the congregation informed.
 - b. The Ministerial Committee conducts training
 - c. The Ministerial conducts an examination of the candidate including background check, Psyche. Exam, & other misc. documentation.
 - d. The candidate is examined on the Floor of presbytery
 - e. After the floor examination is approved the candidate is commissioned on the floor of Presbytery. "Note" An Ad
2. The calling church has elected a Search Committee but after an extended period of time is unable to call an Ordained TE and decides to pursue calling a Commissioned Pastor (CP).
 - a. Search Committee notifies MC and Session of their decision to pursue a CP candidate.
 - b. The Search Committee may continue the search but for a CP. The Session is not required to call a CP but can call a CP in the absence of a Search Committee.
 - c. The Ministerial Committee conducts basic training
 - d. The Ministerial conducts an examination of the candidate including background check, Psyche. Exam, & other misc. documentation.
 - e. The candidate is examined on the Floor of presbytery

- f. After the floor examination is approved the candidate is commissioned on the floor of Presbytery. (“Note” An administrative Commission could be used at a later date.)
- 3. The calling church identifies a candidate who isn’t ordained/member of the calling church.
 - a. The session receives the candidate into the calling churches membership
 - b. The congregation elects the candidate as an off Session RE
 - c. The Session issues a call to the CP candidate ‘
 - d. The Ministerial Committee conducts training
 - e. The Ministerial conducts an examination of the candidate including background check, Psyche. Exam, & other misc. documentation.
 - f. The candidate is examined on the Floor of presbytery
 - g. After the floor examination is approved the candidate is commissioned on the floor of Presbytery. (“Note” An administrative Commission could be used at a later date.)
- 4. TE Jerry Iamurri (Assistant Stated Clerk GA) ruled that CPs can be called to any church in the EPC. They are not limited to the church where they are ordained as an RE. As per TE Tom Pitman 1-6-26
- 5. After a CP has been examined and Commissioned by Presbytery, CPs will be assigned a TE advisor who will oversee in conjunction with the MC a required ongoing training program for the length of the Presbytery approved term.