

Vision and Scope of the CRE Program

Committee Responsibility

PURPOSE: To provide qualified students of the CRE program with the necessary training through multiple disciplines in order that they might serve in competent pastoral ministry to churches of the Maumee Valley Presbytery under the auspices of the Committee on Ministry.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provide timely and accurate information on the CRE program to the Maumee Valley Presbytery.
- Provide ongoing communication and assistance to students in the program.
- Develop and facilitate alternative learning experiences for the students.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of student achievement and yet-to-be accomplished requirements in order to assist students in completing their work in a timely fashion.
- Assign student internships or alternative “practical” experience opportunities.
- Determine additional ecclesiastical services (Baptism, Communion, Moderating Session) that student may engage in and the appropriate training for such responsibilities.
- Monitor student progress.
- Fully evaluate each student at the end of all training in order to determine whether the student has acquired the desired level of competency necessary for serving as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.
- Provide recommendations to Committee on Ministry as to future ministry possibilities and potential of qualified students.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY: The CRE Committee is responsible for the promotion of this program, the selection of students, the training of students and evaluation of students until they are placed under the supervision of Committee on Ministry in active ministry.

CRE PROGRAM:

As part of a 30 month intensive training program the Committee shall:

- Arrange for students to participate in the 2 year on-line CRE program through Union Theological Seminary.
- Arrange for additional cohort experiences consisting of 1-3 day classes to engage students in the review of on-line classwork, provide instruction in areas not covered by Union’s courses, and offer specific training for sacrament administration and moderating session as determined by the CRE committee in partnership with COM.
- Continue existing programs including Teaching Elders to Preach and Bible Content Class needed to supplement the basic CRE training in a timely manner.
- Provide all clerical work needed to document student involvement and accomplishment.

Participant Responsibility

CRE PROGRAM’S PURPOSE: The CRE program is designed to enable ruling elders within the churches of MVP, or ministers of other traditions, without the necessary qualifications of an Ordained Teaching Elder to pursue the necessary training to provide limited pastoral care and ministry to its churches. As such this program is an alternative to the traditional Teaching Elder track of seminary trained clergy. This program is designed as an additional way to meet the needs of churches seeking pastoral ministry. The process involved in this program and the scope of ministry that participants ultimately engage in is entirely under the supervision of the CRE Committee. Those completing the process to the satisfaction of the CRE Committee will operate under the provisions for Commissioned Ruling Elders in the PCUSA Book of Order.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- Application process
- Assignment of mentor
- 9 core courses from Union Theological Seminary with additional local on-site cohort learning experiences at the conclusion of each course.
 - Biblical Interpretation
 - Reformed Theology and Church History
 - Christian Life
 - Mission of the Church to the World
 - Preaching the Bible
 - Teaching the Bible
 - Pastoral Care
 - Administration
 - Worship & Sacraments
- 1-3 additional local on-site classes to supplement the basic online curriculum.
 - Spiritual Formation
 - MVP Preaching Track
 - ????
- Online Bible Content Class offered by MVP.
- Internship or its equivalent to implement practical training
- Final examination and consultation
- Determination of the scope of pastoral responsibilities
- Approval on the floor of Presbytery
- Commissioning to a church

***The 30 month length of the program is based upon a participant's timely involvement with courses, retreats, and classes as they are offered. Learning opportunities that are missed due to some sort of personal crises must be made up at the first opportunity in which they reoffered. In all cases the program must be completed in its entirety within a 12 month grace period following the 30 month program. Exceptions to this may be granted by the CRE Committee due to special circumstances but the Committee is under no obligation to do so.

LIMITATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS: It is imperative that all participants in training, candidates commissioned and the churches associated with them understand the following limitations and expectations:

- Participants as a rule cannot serve the church of which they are a member upon completion of the program. Any exception to this rule is solely may be negotiated with the CRE Committee and Committee on Ministry but the Committees are under no obligation to waive this.
- Any commissioned candidate must immediately vacate his or her relationship with the church they are commissioned to upon completion of their commissioned ministry assignment to that church (even if it is the church of which they are members). As such he or she is beholden to the same expectations as Teaching Elders. This must be firmly understood and agreed upon prior to any commissioning by MVP to a church. No exceptions.
- Upon completion of the program, the Committee shall decide which ecclesiastical functions a CRE may provide to the commissioned church. It is not to be assumed that a participant will be able to moderate session, administer baptism or the Lord's Supper unless specifically assigned those responsibilities by MVP. Any assigned responsibilities by MVP to the CRE is unique to the church that he or she is commissioned to only. It is not to be considered a presbytery wide right or privilege.
- Terms of service upon completion of the program shall be determined by the participant and the church's session. These terms must be approved by Committee on Ministry and must be renewed yearly.
- CREs serving a congregation are expected to attend meetings of the presbytery and are permitted voice and vote privileges. In addition, it is expected that CREs serving a church participate in the work of the presbytery's committees as allowable within their schedule.

- CREs serving a congregation are expected to be involved in continuing education as a part of their continuance in their commission.

COST: The sum total of the approximate cost for the entire program is \$1500. In addition, there will be costs for required books. Financial assistance in the forms of scholarships and or grants **may** be available to those participants meeting the conditions of the CRE Committee on an individual basis.

APPLICATION: Each participant must fully complete the application provided by MVP with responses to all stated questions and satisfy all requests for information. An enrollment fee of \$25 must accompany the application. Said fee may be refunded if the applicant fails to meet committee requirements. A personal interview will be requested by the committee to acquire the additional information necessary to enhance the participant's successful completion of the program.

QUALIFICATIONS: The program is open to those:

- Active members in a PCUSA church who have served as a ruling elder for a minimum of one year and endorsed by his or her local session.
- Ministers from faith expressions outside of PCUSA desiring to serve a church within MVP who fail to meet the standards for ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder)
- Who have public affirmation of a call to ministry
- Able to do college level work.
- Willing to embrace the process with enthusiasm, openness, and humility. This is a process of disciplined learning and experiential training in pastoral ministry specific to PCUSA as handed down from the Reformed Tradition and unique to the community of faith within MVP.
- Willing to abide by the oversight of the CRE Committee and honor the normal standards for ethical ministerial conduct.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION:

1. Participants will be responsible to enroll in the Union Seminary CRE Program and secure the necessary equipment to participate in the classes. Participants will be required to purchase all necessary books and resource material required to complete the class. The cost is \$125 per class and is the responsibility of the participant. The Committee will assist in making all the information available to assist the participant in this process.
2. Participants will be required to attend on-site learning opportunities at the conclusion of each Union class as well as additional on-site learning experiences needed to round out the training. Every attempt will be made to coordinate these sites and times within a convenient framework for all the students. Participants must be willing to make sacrifices in terms of time and distance in order to engage with important opportunities.
3. Participants will be required to meet the standards and complete all assignments and tasks within the scope of this program in a timely fashion. Part of effective ministry is the disciplined use of time and talent and leading by example. An important premium will be placed on quality of work within the standards set forth for each assignment. Participants are being trained for excellence. The Committee will make every attempt to clearly communicate expectations and deadlines.
4. The participant will be provided a mentor to help him or her through the process. These mentors should be utilized as helpful sources of information and valuable resources of experience. They are provided to help the participant succeed in the program and in any commissioned ministry that follows.
5. Participants will need to demonstrate some form of experiential proficiency in the ministry for which they are commissioned. As such, some form of internship, supervised ministry, or other participatory exercise will be assigned by the CRE Committee. MVP is entrusting the churches of our faith community into the care of those commissioned and must be assured of some form of ministerial proficiency, pastoral competency, and ecclesiastical accountability of those commissioned.