

Glossary

- Annual Consultation – Meetings between an inquirer / candidate and his or her CPM liaison held each during year of care for the purpose of nurturing and assessing the individual's development in five key areas: education for ministry, spiritual development, interpersonal relations, personal growth, & professional development.
- Association of Theological Schools – A membership organization of more than 260 graduate schools that conduct post-baccalaureate professional and academic degree programs to educate persons for the practice of ministry and for teaching and research in the theological disciplines. The Commission on Accrediting of ATS accredits the schools and approves the degree programs they offer.
- ATS Accredited – A school that has met the accreditation requirements of the Association of Theological Schools.
- Candidate –The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as ministers of the Word and Sacrament. This shall be accomplished through the guidance and evaluation of candidates, using learning contacts within a context of supportive relationships. (G-14.0304)
- Certified Ready-to-Receive-a-Call – A candidate who has met all the requirements for ordination to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament and is awaiting a first call. Those requirements are, but are not limited to, the following: 1) Meeting the requirements as set forth in G-14.0305j, 2) presentation of a transcript showing satisfactory grades at a regionally accredited college or university, together with a diploma; 3) presentation of a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, the transcript showing satisfactory grades, and presentation of a plan to complete the theological degree including Hebrew and Greek and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek texts; 4) presentation of satisfactory grades together with the examination papers in the five areas covered by the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations for Candidates.
- Church Information Form (CIF) – a descriptive form filled out by a church that is looking for a pastor or associate pastor. The form outlines the qualities and skills the church is hoping to find in its next called pastor.
- Church Leadership Connection (CLC) – The online database of CIFs and PIFs one consults when either seeking a call or seeking a pastor. It is run and managed by the Office of the General Assembly, and can be accessed online through www.pcusa.org.
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) – (awaiting from Jonathan)
- Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) – A standing committee in each presbytery whose sole purpose is the supervision, nurture, and guidance of inquirers and candidates in the process of ordination to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.
- Covenant Relationship -
- CPM Liaison – A member of the CPM who is on the inquirer / candidate's assigned sub-committee who agrees to partner with an inquirer / candidate throughout the process of his/her preparation phase. Although the ideal would be for this person to remain consistent throughout the process for inquirers and candidates, because of committee turnover, an inquirer / candidate typically has at least two, or even three liaisons during his / her preparation.

- Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) – An advanced degree in ministry beyond a Master of Divinity
- Exegesis – The process by which a Biblical text is explored and / or explained for the purpose of discovering its significance or relevance. The primary goal of exegesis is to understand the meaning of the original text in its original context, so that application can be made appropriately into one’s current context. An inquirer / candidate is required to successfully complete courses in both Old and New Testament exegesis, as well as the Exegesis ordination exam.
- Final Assessment – (See G.14.0310) – A consultation with the CPM that occurs in the last stages of the ordination process in which the candidate’s readiness to begin ministry is assessed. This process is to focus on the outcomes of inquiry and candidacy, and includes completion of the requirements of certification set forth in the Book of Order (G-14.0201b-e), but the specifics of final assessment may differ from one presbytery to another. When the final assessment is complete, a summary of it shall be reported to the presbytery and transmitted to a calling presbytery when requested. When the final assessment has been successfully completed, a candidate is considered “certified ready-to-receive-a-call” and can circulate his / her Personal Information Form (PIF)
- Inquirer – An inquirer is one at the beginning of the process toward ordained ministry. According to G-14.0302, “(t)he purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and for those who believe themselves called to ministry of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together in such a way that a decision regarding the inquirer’s suitability for ministry of the Word and Sacrament will be based on knowledge and experience of one another.”
- Master of Divinity – the first professional degree of the pastoral profession, and the most common degree in seminaries and divinity schools. In most denominations, the M.Div. is a standard prerequisite for ordination to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.
- Mid-Course Assessment (MCA) - An assessment done by some of ATS-accredited seminaries that seriously examines the progress of its degree candidates at approximately the half-way point of his / her course of study. Occasionally, additional requirements beyond those set forth in the basic degree program will be required by the seminary as a result of the mid-course assessment. The CPM has nothing to do with the MCA, but in some situations might be informed of specific outcomes, or can request information regarding an inquirer’s or candidate’s MCA.
- Ordination – the process by which individuals are “set apart” to perform various responsibilities in the life of the Church. There are three ordained offices in the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.)— that of Deacon, Elder, and Ministry of Word and Sacrament. A Service of Ordination is held as a part of a worship service, either a typical worship service, or one set aside specifically for the purpose of ordination. Generally, deacons and elders are ordained during a congregation’s usual worship time, while Ministers of Word and Sacrament are ordained during worship services at times set aside and designed specifically for the purpose of his / her ordination. (This is done primarily because of the presence of clergy that is generally required and requested for ordination services of those to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.)
- Ordination exams – Five exams that must be taken and passed prior to ordination. The “Bible Content Exam” is generally taken during the inquiry phase, and is multiple-choice in format. Its purpose is to assess the inquirer’s general knowledge of people, places, and books of the Bible. The other four exams are generally taken at the end of a candidate’s second year of theological

education, and cover the following areas: Open Book Bible Exegesis, Theological Competence, Worship & Sacraments, and Church Polity.

- Personal Information Form (PIF) - a descriptive form filled out by a candidate who has been certified ready to receive a call, or a ministry who is seeking a new call. The form outlines the qualities and skills the individual has to offer to a calling congregation.
- Polity – the system, structure, and guidelines for organizing power and authority in a particular institution. More on our Presbyterian polity can be found in the Book of Order, G-4.0301.
- Psychological Evaluation – A battery of psychological tests and assessments to which an inquirer must submit as part of the initial phase of the preparation process. The results are then compiled in a written report, submitted to the CPM and become a part of the inquirer's / candidate's file. The evaluation of those in Greater Atlanta Presbytery is generally done by George Rinker at Peachtree Presbyterian Counseling Center, but can be done by any counselor / facility that is approved by the presbytery for such assessments.
- Reading Group – The group assigned to read a candidate's final assessment paperwork and make a recommendation to his / her subcommittee regarding the recommended outcome of the final assessment process.
- Reformed Theology – The branch of Christian theology born out of the Protestant Reformation that emphasizes the scholarship of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Heinrich Bullinger, Karl Barth, Shirley Guthrie, and a host of other well-known theologians. It is most simply understood as the belief that we are justified by grace through faith, with both grace and faith being gifts of God given to those whom God chooses, and not earned by the works or decisions of an individual believer.
- Session Liaison - A person on the session of the inquirer / candidate's home congregation who agrees to partner with him / her throughout the process of the preparation phase. While it is ideal if this person can remain consistent throughout the process for inquirers and candidates, it isn't always possible. An inquirer / candidate may have two or even three session liaisons during his / her preparation process. While the session liaison should be an active elder on session at the beginning of the process, the session liaison may continue in this role once the term for service is up. This decision is dependent on the individual congregations.
- Session Orientation – a training session led by a member of the CPM for the session of a church that has an inquirer beginning in the ordination process. Each session with an active inquirer must have a new session orientation UNLESS it has completed one within the previous three years / thirty-six months.