

## **Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) Program**

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE CRE PROGRAM:**

To provide an academic track to prepare Ruling Elders for a commission to a particular pastoral service, and to provide continuing education opportunities to CREs serving in Mission Presbytery.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS:**

A candidate for the CRE program shall submit the Pastor/Session Endorsement Form, the application form and fee to Education and Congregational Nurture Committee (ECN) of Mission Presbytery. Upon receipt of the forms and fee, ECN will assign an advisor to the candidate to guide the candidate through the course program. The candidate shall enroll in the required courses. (Seminary courses may be taken at seminary or online. The candidate's advisor will have the necessary information regarding courses, financial aid and scholarships.)

### **CRE PROGRAM COURSES:**

The following courses would be required:

Seminary Studies:

- Bible Content: Introduction to Old Testament and Introduction to New Testament
- Reformed Theology
- Worship and Preaching
- Pastoral Care

ECN approved studies:

- Polity
- Christian Education
- History and Multi-ethnicity of Mission Presbytery
- Basic Church Management

See Appendix 1 for course descriptions.

### **OVERSIGHT OF PROGRAM:**

The ECN, through the candidate's advisor, will monitor the candidate's progress. Progress reports on all candidates enrolled in the CRE program will be submitted to an oversight team made up of two (2) members: one (1) member from ECN, one (1) member of COM. The oversight team shall keep copies of applications, transcripts and progress reports in the presbytery office.

### **PROGRAM COMPLETION**

Upon satisfactory completion of program courses, the candidate will submit a transcript of seminary courses and written evidence of satisfactory participation in ECN studies. ECN will interview the candidate to determine the candidate's readiness to serve. The interview will cover all topics of the required course work. If the way be clear, ECN will present the candidate to Mission Presbytery as prepared to become a CRE. The candidate will be examined by the Committee On Ministry in the regular order as required by the Book of Order (PCUSA) to be commissioned.

## APPENDIX 1 CRE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### **Bible Content**

This course is designed to acquaint students with the Biblical Canon development in the Old and New Testaments and its sections of Law, History, Wisdom, Prophets, Gospels, Apostolic History, Epistles and Revelation. This study is an important basis for the Preaching course.

### **Reformed Theology**

This course seeks to foster an engagement with the theology of the Reformed tradition. Participants will study the formative history of the Reformed movement, along with a survey of the *Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

### **Polity**

This course is designed to acquaint students to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), with a strong emphasis on the *Book of Order*. Students learn how to navigate through the content of the four sections of the *Book of Order*, and explore the Presbyterian polity as an instrument in their leading an effective ministry.

### **History and Multi-ethnicity of Mission Presbytery**

This course recognizes that Mission Presbytery is full of diversity that include (but are not limited to) race, ethnicity, geographic locations, socio-economics, education, age, and gender. The course explores how we look at people through our own eyes, and how we work in ministry in cultures that differ from our own.

### **Worship and Preaching**

Participants will look at the elements of worship found in “The Directory for Worship” and cover the skills needed in planning and leading worship, speaking, reading Scripture, choosing hymns, etc. The course will also introduce some of the resources available in planning worship services for small church ministry, including but not limited to the *Book of Common Worship*.

### **Pastoral Care**

This course is designed to introduce students to the ministry of pastoral care in the small member church. There will be an emphasis on learning and developing care skills, as well as understanding our role as caregivers. Important areas to be covered include the art of true listening, pastoral counseling-what to do and not do, thoughtful availability, and understanding the dynamics of caring for the flock of a small member church.

### **Christian Education**

This course provides a practical vision for the Church's ministry of education, particularly in the small church/multigenerational setting. Students explore theories of teaching and learning, alternate approaches for teaching, and strategies for integrating the ministry of education.

### **Basic Church Management**

The course covers some of the practical matters that occur in ministry settings including how to moderate meetings, Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAPS) for congregations, budgeting, stewardship, Session Minutes as well as time management, boundaries and other issues that arise in the day-to-day practice of ministry. The course also addresses specific small church concerns in terms of office management, administration and working with volunteers.

**Commissioned Ruling Elder**

**Pastor/Session Endorsement**

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Education and Congregational Nurture Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_ is active in the life of our congregation and is a person who would be a good representative and example for others. He/She is endorsed by the Session of \_\_\_\_\_ to be a candidate of the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program toward which the Session is committed to support spiritually and financially in partnership with Mission Presbytery.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Moderator (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor/Moderator (Please Sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session (Please Sign)

**Commissioned Ruling Elder**

**Program Application**

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Endorsing Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attach \$25 application fee and  
return by mail to:  
Education and Congregational Nurture Committee:  
Mission Presbytery  
7201 Broadway, Suite #303  
San Antonio, TX 78209**