

Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) Equipping Program



Steps Paper and Forms
for becoming a CRE

A Helpful Timeline for the process of becoming
a Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service
(known as **Commissioned Pastor** or CP in The Book of Order)

Presbyterians are known for doing things “Decently and in Order” and doing much of their work in committees. This does support a democratic and fair procedure but can make our processes sometimes feel long and arduous. We have prepared this CRE time-line to help those wanting to navigate the process better by understanding important deadlines and anticipate how long each step in the process may take.

Following are *estimated times* required for each of the steps in the process.

- As you begin the process, you will have to work with your Pastor and Session to have forms CRE Application Forms 1A, 1B & 1C filled out. Since most Sessions only meet once a month, you will need to work with the Pastor to get on the Session docket. Plan on this taking about 2 months.
- After the meeting with the Pastor and Session, you should follow up with them to make sure they have turned in the forms to the CRE Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry (COM) through the Executive Presbyter.
- After you submit your application forms (*Forms CRE-1A, B & C*) to the CRE/CP Subcommittee they will assign you a liaison. The liaison will work with you and your congregation during this process. You should be contacted by your liaison shortly after that person is assigned.
- Also at the start of your program you will need to work with your liaison and supervisor to begin to envision the details of what specialized ministry(s) you are being set aside for and to determine your plan of study (*Planning Forms CRE-2A and 2B*).
- When you have finished all your required class work, you will work with your liaison to schedule a time for examination by the CRE Subcommittee. **One month before** this meeting you will need to send in your Commissioning Forms: Brief Statement of Faith, Biographical History, Commissioning Approval Forms CRE-3A, 3B, and 3C), along with Continuing Development Form 4A.

Because the CRE Subcommittee is a subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry, all their actions must be approved by COM (which meets once a month). Because of when these groups meet and the lead time to get on dockets, it takes *at least 3 months* (longer during summer and holidays) to complete the process of approving you as CRE after your examination. You need to consider this when planning the Presbytery service of worship when you will be commissioned.

- You need to attend the COM meeting where you will be approved as a CRE. COM's approval will be included in the COM next report to Presbytery, so you will most likely be introduced to the Presbytery, either by video or in person.

If you add up all the times outlined here you can see that the CRE commissioning process from start to finish can take **18 months and longer** depending on when you start the program and how much time you can give to the work involved. Though this might seem long it is really a very good season to discern your call and work with others in helping you shape your call to CRE ministry as you prepare for this important work.

To ensure that CREs are well-prepared for their ministry, the following educational requirements are recommended. The specific requirements will be determined in consultation with and approved by the CRE Subcommittee.

1. **Theological Education:** CREs should complete a course of study in Reformed theology, Bible, preaching, worship, sacraments, pastoral care, and church history. This can be accomplished through a seminary, approved lay training programs, or other presbytery-approved educational institutions.
2. **Practical Training:** CREs should participate in practical training opportunities, such as internships, supervised ministry experiences, and workshops on pastoral skills.
3. **Continuing Education:** CREs are encouraged to engage in ongoing education through attending conferences, seminars, and additional coursework to stay current with theological and pastoral developments.

QUESTIONS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Executive Presbyter, The Rev. Dr. Neal D. Presa,
Neal@sanjopseby.org, (408) 763-5004 or Stated Clerk, The Rev.
Grace Kaori Suzuki, Gracekaori@sanjopseby.org



Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service
(known as **Commissioned Pastor** or CP in the PCUSA Book of Order)

APPLICATION (to be completed by the CRE Candidate)

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone (home) _____ (mobile) _____

Email _____ Date of birth _____

Church or Agency _____ If PCUSA, Presbytery _____

Pastor's name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Date received into membership Date Ordained as Ruling Elder _____

Education History:

School _____ Years Attending _____ Degree & Major _____

Current Occupation _____

Brief Essay Questions: (attach to application on separate sheet)

- Why are you applying to this program?
- What gifts and skills do you bring to being a CRE (languages, education, experience etc.).
- In what areas do you feel you need further preparation in being an effective church leader?
- Write a brief one page statement of your personal faith.
- Write a brief one-page personal biographical history

References: Please list the names of two references who are not immediate family members and can comment on your gift of ministry as a leader in the church.

Name _____ Relationship _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Address _____ Phone _____

I hereby authorize the CRE/CP program committee to contact the above people as to my suitability for this program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Email your completed application to: Neal@sanjosepby.org

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Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service
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SUPERVISING PASTOR'S STATEMENT

Must be a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA and within the Presbytery of San Jose

is applying to become part of the Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service (CRE) equipping program. This program is designed to provide basic tools for ministry and training for people who have displayed a level of maturity and commitment and who see further training in pastoral roles of leadership and ministry. Your approval and recommendation are prerequisites for enrollment in this training program. Please comment on the following areas. (Please use extra sheets as needed)

- Comment on this candidate's level of commitment to his/her local congregation.
- List the areas of candidate's involvement in the church.
- Comment on this candidate's leadership abilities.
- What makes this person a good candidate for this training program?
- What are areas of growth for this candidate for leadership in the church?
- Comment on any needs that might require special attention during the training of this candidate.
- Other comments.

Supervising Pastor's Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

Telephone (work) _____ (mobile) _____

Email _____ Church or Agency _____

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosepb.org

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SESSION RECOMMENDATION & COVENANT WITH CRE

The Session of _____, on _____
discussed and approved the recommendation of _____
for admission to the Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service (CRE) Equipping
Program of the Presbytery of San Jose

The Session and Supervising Pastor have discussed the role of a CRE and the anticipated
position for ministry in this congregation with the candidate. The Session has assessed the
candidate's spiritual maturity and gifts for ministry and feel that this candidate is being called by
God to prepare for service in this ministry position.

The Session and Supervising Pastor understand and accept the obligation to provide support to
this candidate in the following areas:

- Spiritual support and encouragement praying regularly for the candidate
- Financial support in the following amounts”

Books _____

Tuition _____

Other _____

- Give opportunities to fulfill directed experiential learning assignments with the
congregation
- Other

Signatures:

Clerk of Session _____ Date _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Moderator of Session _____ Date _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosephby.org

Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service
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INITIAL DESCRIPTION OF POSSIBLE CRE/CP MINISTRY POSITION

This CRE pastoral position description can be generated by a Session seeking a CRE to fulfill unmet needs of a congregation or as a response to gifts of a possible candidate to serve the church where the candidate's gifts and the congregation's needs complement each other. This description of the ministry could change during the training of a candidate for the ministry.

This position will provide ministry at _____

Name of CRE candidate _____

Description of ministry needs

How the congregation will support the work of the CRE?

(Please attach additional information on separate sheet)

Job responsibilities might include:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipleship | <input type="checkbox"/> *Administer Baptism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing/Homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> *Administer Communion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration/Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> *Moderate Session |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Incarceration/Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> *Perform Marriage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Racial Justice | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> Orphan/Foster Care | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Church Development | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

*The Presbytery must explicitly commission a CRE to these activities during the approval process: Administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, moderate the Session, and perform a Christian marriage (when invited by the session and allowed by the State of California)

The CRE's supervisor will be: _____

(ordinarily Moderator of the Session but must be a Minister of Word and Sacrament)

Signatures:

Supervisor _____ Date: _____

CRE Program Liaison _____ Date: _____

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosepbv.org

Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service
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EDUCATIONAL/PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS

Coursework: Training to be commissioned as a CRE includes coursework in a variety of disciplines to fully equip a CRE candidate as a ministry practitioner of the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition. The specific set of classes that will be required for the CRE candidate will fulfill will be tailored to the specific needs of the ministry to which they will be commissioned. The CRE candidate, together with their liaison and the CRE Subcommittee, will jointly discuss and determine the specific set of educational requirements, as well as any internship, externship, or practical learning modalities as needed. The following are some of the classes that might be considered:

1. Theology

- Reformed Theology
- Reformed Worship/Sacraments
- Theological Ethics
- Missional Ecclesiology

2. Biblical Studies and Comparative Religions

- Hermeneutics
- Overview of the Bible
- Biblical Exegesis
- Comparative Religions

3. Practical Ministry

- *Multi-Cultural Church Leadership
- Community-Based Mission
- Organizational Leadership
- Liturgy Development
- Finance/Administration

4. Pastoral Care and Ministry

- *PCUSA Church Polity
- Pastoral Counseling
- Pastoral Self-Care
- Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution
- Homiletics
- Other _____

Directed Experiential Learning

In the space below, please provide the Educational/Practical requirements agreed upon between the CRE candidate, liaison, and the CRE Subcommittee

Signatures:

Supervisor _____ Date: _____
CRE Program Liaison _____ Date: _____

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosephby.org

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TERMS OF APPOINTMENT & COVENANT WITH CRE

Name of Candidate _____ Date of Session or Board action _____

This commission will provide ministry at (community served) _____

Terms of the Commission (up to three years) _____

(begins) _____ (ends) _____

Short Job Description

Job responsibilities might include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipleship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preaching (how often) | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing/Homelessness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration/Advocacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Incarceration/Advocacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Racial Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> Orphan/Foster Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Church Development | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Request for authority granted by presbytery for Commissioned Pastor to:

- Administer the Sacrament of Baptism
- Administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
- Moderate the Session, when invited
- Perform a Service of Christian Marriage (when invited by the session and allowed by the state of California)

The CRE's supervisor is _____ (must be Minister of Word and Sacrament)

Signatures:

CRE Applicant _____ Date _____

Clerk of Session _____ Date _____

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk _____ Date _____

Date of Examination by the CRE Subcommittee _____

Date of Presbytery Approval of the Administrative Commission _____

Date of Commissioning of CRE (the Commissioning Service) _____

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosephby.org

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**TERMS OF APPOINTMENT & COVENANT WITH CRE (OTHER
DETAILS OF COMMISSION)**

Name of Church Agency _____

Name of CRE _____

This covenant has been reviewed and approved by the Session or responsible agency board and reviewed by the CRE Subcommittee and its agents. This relationship may be terminated prior to its expiration with 30 days' notice by the CRE or Session/Board with concurrence of the CRE Subcommittee or Committee on Ministry.

Time expectations (per week or month) _____

Specific days of ministry (if applicable) _____

Reimbursement plans

Salary or stipend _____

Travel reimbursement @ ___ cents per mile _____

Other ministry cost reimbursement _____

Book allowance _____

Vacation time _____

Continuing education allowance _____

Continuing education time _____

Other compensation (if applicable) _____

Medical coverage (if applicable) _____

SIGNATURES

CRE _____ Date _____

Clerk of Session or Board _____ Date _____

Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk _____ Date _____

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosephby.org

Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service
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PLANS FOR CRE COMMISSIONING

Name _____ Date _____

Details for Commissioning Service (This service should take place other than Sunday morning so that members of Presbytery may attend.)

Zoom Link or Physical Location _____

Date _____ Time Will Communion be served? _____

Proposed Administrative Commission (The following have agreed to serve)

Moderator of Presbytery or Designee (Teaching or Ruling Elder?) _____

Teaching Elder and Church _____

Teaching Elder and Church _____

Teaching Elder and Church (if needed) _____

Ruling Elder and Church _____

Ruling Elder and Church _____

Ruling Elder and Church (if needed) _____

For an Administrative Commission the Presbytery of San Jose requires a minimum of 6 members (3 teaching elders, 3 ruling elders), and all must be members of the Presbytery of San Jose. Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders must be from different congregations. Teaching elders who are honorably retired and who are members of the Presbytery of San Jose may also serve on the Administrative Commission. Teaching elders who are members of another presbytery but who reside within the geographical bounds of the Presbytery of San Jose may serve on the Administrative Commission as corresponding members.

The current Moderator of Presbytery or his/her/their designee presides as Moderator of the Administrative Commission and is part of the required 5 members. It is the candidate's responsibility to contact the members to serve. Inclusivity is expected with regard to representation as to congregations, gender, ethnicity, age, etc.

One month before the Presbytery meeting where the Candidate is presented, he/she /they will need to turn in the a one-page Statement of Faith and one-page Biographical History. These versions of the Statement of Faith and Bio will be the final form after meeting for examination with the CRE Subcommittee and COM.

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosepb.org

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CRE First year Growth Objectives and Program Review

check box if new information on the form

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone (home): _____ **(mobile):** _____

Email address: Congregation name and city: _____

Date of Commissioning: Number of Years: Last Annual Review: _____

Growth Objectives for the coming year (about one paragraph for each question)

- Educational (classes to take, books to read, etc.)
- Spiritual Development (working with a spiritual director, the practice of spiritual disciplines, etc.)
- Interpersonal Development (time with family/friends, small groups attended, etc.)
- Personal Development (exercise, vacation time, eating well, etc.)
- Professional Development (plans for future, classes taken, conferences to attend, etc.)

CRE Preparation Experience (about one paragraph for each question)

- What classes were most valuable to you and why?
- What classes were least valuable and why?
- How well were you supported/mentored by your Church and the CRE Program?
- How can we improve upon the CRE equipping program?
- Do you have any additional classes to suggest or instructors to recommend?
- What are your plans for renewal of commissioning when the time comes?

Additional Comments: What else would you like us to know?

Complete and Email to: Neal@sanjosephby.org
For questions or information contact your liaison

Appendix A

Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service (known as **Commissioned Pastor** or CP in The Presbytery of San Jose)

Guidance for your brief statement of faith

As you prepare for your examination to be commissioned as a CRE you will need to present a short Statement of Faith. Your Statement should no more than one page long and include the list of topics below. This list is not comprehensive but it is helpful to include them. We encourage you to be creative and let “you” shine through. We want your statement to be personal, to clearly be your own, not to be trite or a “cookie cutter” Statement of Faith. That being said, below are a list of topics you should include.

The CRE Subcommittee, your liaison, your supervisor, and your support network will help you look at your statement of faith and make suggestions where needed. Your one-page Statement of Faith and your one-page biography (a separate document) will be included with the documents that go to the Committee on Ministry when your commissioning is approved.

Here are some topics that you should include.

- The Trinity
- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- The Bible
- The Church, its nature and mission
- Sin/brokenness
- Forgiveness/Reconciliation
- Salvation
- The Sacraments
- Eschatology – that part of theology concerned with death, judgement, and the final destiny of the soul and humankind, the in-breaking of God’s promise in the present

These topics can be woven into others and don’t have to be fully examined. Lean on us as needed with developing your brief statement of faith.

Appendix B

Commissioned Ruling Elder to Particular Pastoral Service (known as **Commissioned Pastor** or CP in The Presbytery of San Jose)

Psychological and Vocational Assessment/Evaluation

(Approved by COM on June 8, 2026 and effective on June 9, 2026)

To support the discernment of a candidate for Commissioned Ruling Elder, the candidate's ministry of care, the CRE Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry, the Committee on Ministry, and the Presbytery, the Presbytery of San José requires all persons enrolled as a CRE candidate on/after June 9, 2026 and all current CREs who seek to renew their commission to undergo and receiving a psychological and vocational assessment/evaluation.

Such an assessment/evaluation is required of all inquirers/candidates for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The assessment/evaluation is an important means for any person who seeks to receive a call to assess their psychological, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, and how that relates to one's sense of vocation to ministry.

The CRE Subcommittee of the Presbytery will refer and recommend CRE candidates to a trained, licensed assessor/counselor, utilizing the practitioners that the Committee on Preparation for Ministry uses or recommends.