

# Candidacy

**“Candidacy”  
(Coming Under Care of Presbytery)**

Every man seeking ordination for ministry in the Presbyterian Church in America must be a member of some PCA church, for at least six months (minimum), prior to candidacy. This PCA church should know him well enough to honestly complete the Sessional endorsement to presbytery for candidacy.

Ordinarily this presbytery should be the one in which his endorsing church is a member. In other words, a man usually comes under care of the presbytery of his home church or church holding his full membership.

Every applicant for the ministry must put himself under the care of presbytery, which should ordinarily be the presbytery that has jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. The endorsement of his Session must be given to the presbytery, consisting of testimonials regarding his Christian character and promise of usefulness in the ministry. The endorsement should also describe the activities of ministry the applicant has participated in with brief evaluation.

Every applicant for care shall be a member of the congregation whose Session provides an endorsement for at least six months before filing his application, except in those cases deemed extraordinary by the presbytery. (BCO 18-2, para. 1&2)

There are other options for candidates, such as membership in a home church and candidacy in a presbytery where one holds an associate membership, but these are not preferred. A candidate would be wise to come under the care of the presbytery in which he will eventually seek ordination.

Applications for candidacy must be filed with the clerk of presbytery at least one month in advance of the presbytery meeting (BCO 18-2, para. 3). The deadlines for applications for candidacy, internships, licensures and ordinations in the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley (PMV) can be found on page 18 of this packet.

The candidate must have completed the following documents for candidacy status (enclosed):

1. General Candidacy Application
2. Sessional Certification for Candidacy
3. A copy of college and seminary transcripts
4. A recent photograph
5. The Spiritual Inventory
  - for candidate
  - for spouse
6. A letter of transfer from your current presbytery if you are requesting transfer of your candidacy to the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley (PMV).

Guidelines and requisite forms are enclosed in this section of the booklet.

## **BCO, Chapter 18:1-8**

### **Candidates for the Gospel Ministry**

18-1. A candidate for the ministry is a member of the church in full communion who, believing himself to be called to preach the Gospel, submits himself to the care and guidance of the presbytery in his course of study and of practical training to prepare himself for this office.

18-2. Every applicant for the ministry must put himself under the care of presbytery, which should ordinarily be the presbytery that has jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. The endorsement of his Session must be given to the presbytery, consisting of testimonials regarding his Christian character and promise of usefulness in the ministry. The endorsement should also describe the activities of ministry the applicant has participated in with brief evaluation.

Every applicant for care shall be a member of the congregation whose session provides an endorsement for at least six months before filing his application, except in those cases deemed extraordinary by the presbytery.

Every applicant must file his application with the clerk of the presbytery at least one month before the meeting of the presbytery. An applicant for care may not be received under care and examined for ordination at the same meeting of the presbytery, since he must serve a period of at least one year of internship prior to ordination (see BCO 19-7 and 21-4). An applicant for internship is obliged to be under care and may be licensed to preach the Gospel; further, one who is not already under care may be taken under care, be licensed to preach the Gospel, and become an intern at the same meeting of presbytery.

18-3. The applicant shall appear before the presbytery in person, and shall be examined by the presbytery on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry.

If the testimonials and the examination prove satisfactory, the presbytery shall receive him under its care after the following manner:

The moderator shall propose to the applicant these questions:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

If these questions be answered in the affirmative, the moderator, or someone appointed by him, shall give the candidate a brief charge; and the proceeding shall close with prayer.

The name of the applicant is then to be recorded on the presbytery's roll of candidates for the ministry.

18-4. The candidate continues to be a private member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction of the Session, but as respects his preparatory training for the ministry he is under the oversight of the presbytery. It shall be the duty of the presbytery to show a kindly and sympathetic interest in him, and to give him counsel and guidance in regard to his studies, his practical training, and the institutions of learning he should attend. In no case may a candidate omit from his course of study. Any of the subjects prescribed in the Form of Government as tests for ordination without obtaining the consent of presbytery (see BCO 21-4); and where such consent is given the presbytery shall record the fact and the reasons therefore.

18-5. For the development of his Christian character, for the service he can render, and for his more effective training, the candidate, when entering on his theological studies, should be authorized and encouraged by the presbytery to conduct public worship, to expound the Scriptures to the people, and to engage in other forms of Christian work. These forms of service should be rendered under the direction of presbytery, and also with the sanction and under the guidance of the candidate's instructors during the time of his being under their instruction. A candidate should not undertake to serve a church which is without a pastor as regular supply unless he has been licensed and approved for that supply by the presbytery having jurisdiction of the church (see BCO 19-1).

18-6. The presbytery shall require every candidate for the ministry under its care to make a report to it at least once a year; and it shall secure from his instructors an annual report upon his deportment, diligence, and progress in study.

18-7. The presbytery may, upon application of the candidate, give a certificate of dismissal to another presbytery. The candidate may be allowed to retain membership in his home church upon the request of his Session and the approval of both presbyteries involved. A candidate shall, at his request, be allowed to withdraw from the care of the presbytery. The presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove the name of the candidate from its roll of candidates; but in such a case it shall report its actions and the reasons therefore to the candidate and to the Session of his church.

18-8. An applicant coming as a candidate from another denomination must present testimonials of his standing in that body and must become a member of a congregation in the Presbyterian Church in America. He shall then fulfill the requirements of applicants listed under BCO 18-2, as well as requirements placed upon those desiring to be licensed or to become an intern as set forth in BCO 19.

## **Candidate's Checklist**

- ❑ Filled out General Candidacy Application. Send to Credentials Committee.
- ❑ Gave Sessional Certification to my pastor or Clerk of Session.
- ❑ Have met with my pastor and Session concerning my conversion and call to the ministry. Sent certification to Credentials Committee.
- ❑ Sent photograph to Credentials chairman.
- ❑ Sent transcripts to Credentials Committee.
- ❑ If transferring from another presbytery, requested letter of transfer to PMV.
- ❑ Filled out Spiritual Inventory.
- ❑ Spouse filled out Spiritual Inventory.
- ❑ Contacted Credentials assistant about time, date and location of Credentials Committee examination.

## **Guidelines for Applicants for Candidacy**

### **Prerequisites:**

1. You must be a member of a Presbyterian Church in America congregation for at least six (6) months before applying.
2. You may be a candidate in another presbytery of the PCA and desire to transfer your candidacy.

### **Forms Required: (Must be submitted by date in Schedule of Deadlines)**

1. A completed "General Candidacy Application."
2. A copy of all your college (official copy from registrar) and seminary (unofficial) transcripts.
3. A recent photograph.
4. "Sessional Certification" from your church Session.
5. If transferring, a copy of your letter to your current presbytery requesting transfer to the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley (PMV).

### **Procedure:**

1. Submit all paperwork listed above by date in **Schedule of Deadlines**.
2. If you are transferring your candidacy from another presbytery, you must write a letter to the chairman of the appropriate committee in that presbytery requesting to be transferred to PMV.
3. All applicants are required to appear before the Credentials Committee approximately one month preceding the meeting of presbytery, and then again before the presbytery to be examined on experiential religion (personal testimony of conversion and lifestyle) and motives for seeking the ministry. You should contact the chairman of the Credentials Committee for notification of exact dates, times and locations of committee meetings and examinations.

### **Responsibilities:**

The Credentials Committee is responsible to seek to help and guide candidates in their preparation for the ministry. To do so, we expect each candidate to report regularly.

1. You must report annually (at the anniversary Presbytery meeting where your candidacy was approved), the progress you have seen in your spiritual growth, the status of your education and preparation, ministries in which you have been involved, plans and/or desires you have for Internship, and ways that you would like presbytery to assist you.
2. You must submit in June of each year an updated transcript of your seminary training.

### **Terms:**

Candidates will be maintained on the roll of presbytery only as long as they remain active in reporting to presbytery. Failure to report as scheduled will result in dismissal.

**ALL APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED ELECTRONICALLY.** Send applications, reports, and papers to:

Credentials Committee  
David Strain, Chairman  
c/o Tricia Baugus, committee assistant  
(601)940-2966  
p\_mvcredentials@gmail.com

### Required Reports:

<b>Report</b>	<b>Required for</b>	<b>Due</b>
Oral Report	Interns and Candidates	Annually at the anniversary Presbytery meeting where candidacy/internship was approved
Intern Report	Interns only	3 times a year (each quarter except for above oral report)
Mentor Assessment of Intern	Interns only	February and August (for March & September committee meetings)
Session Assessment of Intern	Interns only	November (for December committee meeting)
Faculty Report on Candidates and Interns	Candidates and Interns	November (for December committee meeting)
Updated seminary transcript	Candidates only	Annually in June

## SCHEDULE OF DEADLINES

Year	Presbytery Meeting	Credentials Committee Meeting	Deadline for Submissions to Credentials Committee
2021	February 2 May 4 August 3 November 2	December 8, 2020 March 9 June 8 September 14	November 20, 2020 February 19 May 21 August 27
2022	February 1 May 3 August 2 November 1	December 14, 2021 March 8 June 14 September 13	November 26, 2021 February 18 May 27 August 26
2023	February 7 May 2 August 1 November 7	December 13, 2022 March 14 June 13 September 12	November 25, 2022 February 24 May 26 August 25