

Licensure

“Licensure to Preach in the PCA”

Licensure to preach in the PCA is not an essential step in the process of ordination unless one is regularly to preach in PCA pulpits during candidacy and internship. Licensure can occur before, during or after an internship. Licensure may also be granted to ruling elders, to non-PCA personnel, or to PCA teaching elders ordained in other presbyteries, or others desiring to preach in our presbyteries.

To preserve the purity of the preaching of the Gospel, no man is permitted to preach in the pulpits of the Presbyterian Church in America on a regular basis without proper licensure from the presbytery having jurisdiction where he will preach. An ordained teaching elder who is a member in good standing of another presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America may be licensed after being examined as to his views, according to the provision of BCO 13-6. This license shall immediately become void if the minister’s own presbytery administers against him a censure of suspension from office or the sacraments, or deposition from office, or of excommunication (in the event of such censures, the presbytery with jurisdiction shall always notify the licensing presbytery). A ruling elder, a candidate for the ministry, a minister from some other denomination, or some other man may be licensed for the purpose of regularly providing the preaching of the Word upon his giving satisfaction to the presbytery of his gifts and passing the licensure examination. (See also BCO 22-5 and 22-6.) (BCO 19-1)

The Standing Rules of PMV clearly state that licensure is required for any person preaching more than once a month, on a regular basis, in any PMV church (Article IV, C).

Sessions desiring to have a minister, a student preparing for the ministry, or a ruling elder fill their pulpit more than once a month on a regular basis must request approval for a supply relationship from the presbytery. Preliminary approval may be granted by the Credentials Committee for members of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley or for other men who have been examined by the committee. No man may fill a pulpit more than once a month on a regular basis in any church in the presbytery without meeting with the Credentials Committee.

Licensure will also be necessary for those interns who regularly preach as part of their internship responsibilities. A man may choose to be licensed in preparation for his ordination exams, since licensure exams are very similar, and in parts are identical, to ordination examinations. The licensure examinations include:

1. Christian experience and call to the ministry
2. English Bible
3. Reformed Theology (*Westminster Standards*)
4. Church Government (*Book of Church Order*)
5. Views on specific theological issues
6. A sermon outline/manuscript

Men who are seeking a stated supply or student supply relationship with a local church should provide a letter of request from the Clerk of the Session of said church.

In order to provide necessary changes in pastorates, a temporary relation may be established between a church and a minister called Stated Supply. If a church is unable to secure a regular pastor or a Stated Supply, then the Session with approval of presbytery may establish a temporary relation between the church and a licentiate called Student Supply or Ruling Elder Supply. (BCO 22-5)

Such temporary relationships can take place at the invitation of the church Session to the minister of the Word, the licentiate, or the ruling elder. The length of the relationship will be determined by the Session and the minister, the licentiate, or the ruling elder, with the approval of the presbytery. Stated supply, student supply, or ruling elder supply relationships will be for no longer than one year, renewable at the request of the Session and at the review of the presbytery. (See also BCO 19-1). (BCO 22-6)

Guidelines for application and examination for licensure are enclosed in this booklet. Be careful to read all the instructions for the various parts of the written examinations.

Licensure Checklist

- Completed and submitted licensure application.
- Secured letter of request from the Session of the church seeking stated supply (if necessary).
- Completed an "Examination on Views."
- Completed the examinations on English Bible, Theology and Church Government.
- Submitted a written sermon outline/manuscript.
- Have applied for renewal of licensure if necessary.
- Contacted the Credentials assistant for time, date and location of Credentials Committee meeting and examinations.

Views on Theological Issues

The following list of controversial issues and theological topics will be covered in examinations of all candidates. This list is provided for preparation on the part of each candidate.

THIS IS NOT THE ACTUAL EXAM.

Please request the exam from the committee: pmvcredentials@gmail.com

1. Length of days of creation (Genesis 1)
2. The role of women in church office
3. The two-office or three-office view of church government
4. The regulative principle to worship (drama, dance, music styles, etc.)
5. The Sabbath view held by each candidate
6. The sign, or “miraculous,” or apostolic gifts
 - Tongues
 - Interpretation
 - Miracles
 - Healing
7. The continuing role of prophecy in the church today
8. The covenant of works
9. Antinomianism: the Law as it applies today
10. Views of psalmody in worship
11. Frequency of communion
12. Paedo-communion
13. Divorce and remarriage
14. The validity of Roman Catholic baptism
15. The validity of re-baptism
16. The Lordship controversy and the carnal Christian
17. Fencing the Lord’s Table
18. The necessity and method of church discipline
19. Subscription to subordinate standards
20. Christian liberty: the use of alcohol and tobacco
21. Civil disobedience

22. Christian education: public school, private school, home school, Christian school
23. Your definition of Presbyterianism
24. Theonomy
25. The Impeccability of Christ

BCO 19:1-6

19-1. To preserve the purity of the preaching of the Gospel, no man is permitted to preach in the pulpits of the Presbyterian Church in America on a regular basis without proper licensure from the presbytery having jurisdiction where he will preach. An ordained teaching elder who is a member in good standing of another presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America may be licensed after being examined as to his views, according to the provision of BCO 13-6. This license shall immediately become void if the minister's own presbytery administers against him a censure of suspension from office or the sacraments, or deposition from office, or of excommunication (in the event of such censures, the presbytery with jurisdiction shall always notify the licensing presbytery). A ruling elder, a candidate for the ministry, a minister from some other denomination, or some other man may be licensed for the purpose of regularly providing the preaching of the Word upon his giving satisfaction to the presbytery of his gifts and passing the licensure examination. (See also BCO 22-5 and 22-6.)

19-2. Examination for Licensure.

The examination for licensure shall be as follows:

- a. Give a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel in written form and/or orally before the presbytery (at the discretion of the presbytery).
- b. Be tested with a written and/or oral examination by the presbytery (at the discretion of the presbytery) for his:
 1. basic knowledge of Biblical doctrine as outlined in the Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in America.
 2. practical knowledge of the Bible content.
 3. basic knowledge of the government of the Presbyterian Church in America as defined in The Book of Church Order.
- c. Be examined orally before presbytery for his views in the areas outlined in part b above.
- d. Provide his written sermon on an assigned passage of Scripture embodying both explanation and application, and present orally his sermon or exhortation before presbytery or before a committee of presbytery.

No presbytery shall omit any of these parts of examination except in extraordinary cases; and whenever a presbytery shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons therefore, and of the trial parts omitted.

19-3. Questions for Licensure.

If the presbytery be satisfied with the trials of the applicant, it shall then proceed to license him in the following manner:

The moderator shall propose to him the following questions, namely:

- 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?**
- 2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture?**
- 3. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?**
- 4. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this presbytery, or of any other into the bounds of which you may be called?**

19-4. The applicant having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall offer a prayer suitable for the occasion, and shall address the applicant as follows:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He has given to the church for its edification, we do license you to preach the Gospel in this presbytery wherever God in His providence may call you; and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you, and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen.

Record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form:

At _____, the _____ day of _____, the _____ presbytery, having received testimonials commending _____, proceeded to submit to him to the prescribed examination for licensure, which was met to the approval of the presbytery. Having satisfactorily answered the questions for licensure, _____ was licensed by the presbytery to preach the Gospel within the bounds of this presbytery.

19-5. When any licentiate shall have occasion to remove from the bounds of his presbytery into those of another, the latter presbytery may, at its discretion, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, repeat any portion of the previous presbytery's examination it desires. The presbytery into whose bounds the licentiate is moving, however, must at least examine the man concerning:

- a. his Christian experience,
- b. his call to preach the Gospel,
- c. his views in theology,
- d. his Bible content,
- e. church government.

This presbytery then may license him to preach within its bounds.

19-6. The license to preach the Gospel shall expire at the end of four years. The presbytery may, if it thinks proper, renew it without further examination. The licentiate must apply for renewal prior to expiration. If the license expires, the stated clerk shall report the expiration to the presbytery and to the individual's Session, and such action shall be recorded in the minutes. The procedures of BCO 19-2 must be followed for re-licensure and such fact shall be recorded in the minutes. The license may be terminated at any time by a simple majority vote of the issuing presbytery. The presbytery shall always record its reasons for this action in its minutes.

Guidelines for Applicants Seeking Licensure

Who should seek Licensure?

1. You need to be licensed if you preach more than once a month in one of the pulpits of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley.
2. Depending on the frequency of preaching, you may need to be licensed in order to become an intern of this presbytery.
3. You need not be a candidate of this presbytery in order to be licensed.

Forms Required: (MUST BE SUBMITTED BY DATE IN SCHEDULE OF DEADLINES!!)

1. A completed "Licensure Application."
2. A recent personal photograph (unless submitted as part of candidacy process).
3. A completed "Examination on Views."
4. A completed set of examinations: English Bible, Theology and Church Government.
5. A manuscript of the sermon you will preach at presbytery. Use the enclosed "Guidelines for Sermon" as a reference for composing your sermon.
6. A written request for you to become a Student (or Stated) Supply from the Session of the church you intend to supply (if applicable). This request must be renewed annually.

Procedure:

Applicants for licensure are required to be examined in Christian Experience, Views, Theology, English Bible, and Church Government. The examination procedure has three stages. First, you will take a set of written exams, under the supervision of a proctor, which must be submitted approximately two weeks before the Credentials Committee meets. Second, the Credentials Committee is charged to give you an oral examination in the same areas. Finally, the full presbytery will examine you again in these areas at its stated meeting. You will also be expected to preach at presbytery. Contact the chairman of the Credentials Committee for exact dates, times, and locations of committee meetings and examinations.

Terms:

Licensure will expire at the end of four years, at which time the licentiate may apply for renewal.

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

Credentials Committee

David Strain, Chairman

c/o Tricia Baugus, committee assistant

(601)940-2966

pmvcredentials@gmail.com

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

**Guidelines for Sermons Submitted to the
Credentials Committee of the Presbytery of the
Mississippi Valley**

Candidates for licensure and ordination are required to preach a sermon before the presbytery. You will be assigned a text by the Credentials Committee chairman in accordance with committee guidelines. You should contact the chairman for your assignment. Part of the requirement is to submit that sermon, in writing, to the Credentials Committee in the following format:

1. Sermons are to be typed and double-spaced.
2. Written sermons are to include:
 - a. A detailed sermon outline,
 - b. A manuscript of the sermon composed in an oral style, and
 - c. A bibliography which should include at least three exegetical commentaries.
3. Sermons are to be constructed in accordance with the principles of:
 - a. Unity (Concentration of one biblical principle),
 - b. Order (Organized, not just a miscellaneous collection of thoughts),
 - c. Proportion (Some symmetry in dealing with major ideas),
 - d. Progress (Logical and psychological movement to a climactic conclusion),
 - e. Vitality (Related both to the text and congregation).
4. The detailed sermon outline should include:
 - a. The candidate's name.
 - b. The biblical text of the sermon.
 - c. The title of the sermon.
 - d. The occasion for which the sermon was written (i.e., presbytery meeting, Sunday worship services, etc.).
 - e. The proposition (theme, central idea, homiletical idea, thesis, controlling assertion), a simple declarative sentence which sets forth the central idea of the biblical text in the form of a timeless principle.
 - f. The specific objective or purpose of the sermon, i.e., the change(s) in the thinking, affections and/or actions of the hearers of the sermon for which you pray and preach.
 - g. A few sentences of the sermon's introduction.

- h. Major divisions of the outline which develop the text and proposition.
 - i. Subdivisions which develop the major divisions.
 - j. Notation of illustrations at appropriate points.
 - k. Notation of applications at appropriate points
 - l. A few sentences of the sermon's conclusion.
5. The preached sermon (at presbytery) shall be no longer than thirty (30) minutes. Due to this time constraint, it may be that the text of the written sermon will have to be shortened for delivery, but, NOTE WELL, the written sermon and sermon outline submitted to the Credentials Committee must be complete and in accord with these guidelines.
6. Finally, remember that although this sermon is a part of your licensure or ordination trials, your purpose here is not to impress us with your learning or persuasiveness. Charles Spurgeon said:

The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls, nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give it the power to convert the soul.

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God . . . My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power . . .

(1 Corinthians 2:1,4)