

# Ordination

## **“Ordination to the Gospel Ministry”**

Ordination to the office of teaching elder is always to some specific (definite) call. This call may come from a local church, a mission agency (MTW), a campus work (RUF), or other ministry necessitating ordination. The *Book of Church Order* is clear about this:

17-1 Those who have been called to office in the church are to be inducted by the ordination of a court.

17-2. Ordination is the authoritative admission of one duly called to an office in the Church of God, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands, to which it is proper to add the giving of the right hand of fellowship.

17-3. As every ecclesiastical office, according to the Scriptures, is a special charge, no man shall be ordained unless it be to the performance of a definite work.

21-1. No minister, licentiate or candidate shall receive a call from a church but by the permission of his presbytery. When a call has been presented to the presbytery, if found in order and the presbytery deem it for the good of the Church, they shall place it in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.

Ordinarily a candidate or licentiate may not be granted permission by the presbytery to move on to the field to which he has been called, prior to his examination for licensure or ordination. Likewise an ordained minister from another Presbyterian Church in America presbytery or another denomination, ordinarily shall not move on to the field to which he has been called until examined and received by presbytery.

21-2. When an intern has completed his internship to the satisfaction of the presbytery, and has accepted a call, the presbytery shall take immediate steps for his ordination.

The trials for ordination include an extensive series of examinations, set forth by the BCO.

- a. A careful examination as to:
  1. his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
  2. his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
  3. Bible content,
  4. theology,
  5. the Sacraments,
  6. church history,
  7. the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
  8. the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

A presbytery may accept a seminary degree which includes study in the original languages in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages.
- b. He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by presbytery.
- c. The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages.
- d. He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the presbytery or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote. (21-4)

These requirements from the BCO are met by PMV in the following manner:

BCO Requirement	PMV Examination
X Experiential Religion	X Testimony of conversion and call to the ministry
X Knowledge of Greek and Hebrew	X Transcripts from seminary and an exegesis paper (seminary paper acceptable)
X Bible content	X Examination in English Bible
X Theology	X Examination in Theology and Views on certain Theological issues
X The Sacraments	X Examination on the Sacraments
X Church History and History of the PCA	X Examination in Church History
X Rules of Government and Discipline	X Examination on the Book of Church Order
X Exegesis of Scripture	X Exegetical paper on a passage of Scripture
X Thesis on some Theological topic	X Theology paper (seminary paper acceptable)
X Preach a sermon	X Written sermon in full manuscript and preached before presbytery
X Call to a specific work	X Written call following the form of BCO 20-6

Many of these sections of the ordination examination completed for licensure will not need to be repeated. The Credentials chairman should be consulted prior to filling out any ordination exams.

In addition to a written copy of your call to a particular ministry, you must also provide a commission for your ordination.

Among the matters that may be properly executed by commissions are the taking of the testimony in judicial cases, the ordination of ministers, the installation of ministers, the visitation of portions of the church affected with disorder, and the organization of new churches.

Every commission appointed by presbytery shall consist of at least two teaching elders and two ruling elders, and the presbytery at the time of the appointment of the commission shall determine what the quorum shall be. However, should a presbytery clothe a commission with judicial powers and authority to conduct judicial process, or with power to ordain or install a teaching elder of the Gospel, the quorum of such commission shall not be less than two teaching elders and two

ruling elders. The quorum for a commission appointed as an interim session need not conform to the requirements of a judicial commission, but only to those of a session (BCO 12-1). When the ordination of a minister is committed to a commission, the presbytery itself shall conduct the previous examination. (BCO 15-2)

This commission shall consist of three teaching elders and three ruling elders and may include “visiting brothers” from other PCA presbyteries. At least one teaching elder and one ruling elder must be from a church other than the church in which you are being installed. This will allow a quorum of two teaching elders and two ruling elders to conduct the ordination service. The written copy of the commission should include the date, the place and the time of the ordination service.

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### Ordination Checklist

- Contact Credentials chairman for copies of examinations.
- Submit final copy of seminary transcript(s); submit undergraduate transcript(s) if not a PMV candidate.
- Submit exegesis paper.
- Submit theology paper.
- Submit written sermon (if not submitted for licensure).
- Submit call to a specific ministry (BCO 20-6).
- Submit written copy of your ordination commission.
- Complete and submit examinations: Theology, Views, Sacraments, Church Government, English Bible and Church History.
- Contact Credentials assistant for date, time and location of committee meeting and examinations.

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### Commission for Ordination

Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Elders:

Ruling Elders:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Visiting Members:

## 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](mailto: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

**The Proper Form of a Call**  
**THE PRESBYTERY OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY**

Call to a Particular Ministry

**T**he [Church name] Presbyterian Church, [town, state] being on sufficient grounds well satisfied with the qualifications of you, TE [Pastor's name], and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, does earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord.

That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ a year in regular monthly payments, with the following benefits: [specific amounts]

- Housing Allowance:
- Health Insurance:
- Retirement:
- Ministry Expense:
- Travel Allowance:
- Vacation Time: Four weeks per year,

during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church.

This second day of August, AD 2011 [date of the congregational meeting].

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Attest: I, having moderated the congregational meeting which extended a call to [name] for his ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the *Book of Church Order*, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the congregation.

\_\_\_\_\_

[Name]

Moderator

**THE CALL MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE CLERK OF PRESBYTERY AND TO THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE.**

## **Guidelines for Applicants Seeking Ordination in the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley**

### **Prerequisites:**

1. A bachelor's degree and a seminary education or its approved equivalent.
2. Completion of an Internship Program.
3. A call to a particular church or work. A copy of the call should be sent by the calling church to the Credentials Committee and to the Stated Clerk of Presbytery.

### **Papers Required: (MUST BE SUBMITTED BY DATE IN SCHEDULE OF DEADLINES)**

1. Transcripts from college and seminary awarding your degrees (if not previously submitted).
2. Completed "General Candidacy Application."
3. Exegesis paper (may be a seminary paper).
4. Theological paper (may be a seminary paper or the paper written during your internship).
5. Written sermon in full manuscript form. Use the enclosed "Guidelines for Sermon" as a reference for composing your sermon. You will preach this sermon before presbytery on the day of your ordination trials. (NOTE WELL!! If you were licensed in the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley and prepared and preached a sermon for those trials, you will NOT be asked to preach a sermon for ordination.)
6. Completed set of examinations: Theology, Views, Church History, Polity, Sacraments and English Bible.
7. A call to a particular work (properly attested and signed: see BCO 20-6 through 20-8).
8. Recommended Commission (members, date and time) to ordain and install you. Your Commission should consist of three teaching elders and three ruling elders from the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley. At least one of each should be from churches other than the one to which you have been called.

### **Procedure:**

1. Submit all required paperwork by date in Schedule of Deadlines.
2. Take written examination (date will be approximately two weeks prior to the Stated Meeting of the Credentials Committee).
3. Be examined by Credentials Committee and then by full presbytery in all areas listed in BCO 21-4.
4. Contact the chairman of the Credentials Committee for exact dates, times and locations of committee meetings and examinations.
5. Be ordained and installed by a commission of presbytery.

**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
2020	February 4 May 5 August 4 November 3	December 10, 2019 March 10 June 9 September 8	November 22, 2019 February 21 May 22 August 21
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

## **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) 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)