***1.* It Begins with a Calling…**
Presbyterians believe that all persons are called to ministry in their communities however particular forms of leadership are needed for the work of the church.  Presbyterians understand a call to ministry to have three parts: 1) an inner sense of call; 2) a community that tests this sense of call; and 3) a call from a community to serve in a particular place.
***2.* I Feel Called, What Do I Do Now?**
A person who feels called by God to be a Presbyterian minister, known as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, begins by first filling out Form 1 and expressing their desire to their church's Session. The person must be an active member of the church for at least six months before this can happen. If the Session agrees with the person’s sense of call, they agree to *endorse*the person and will appoint an elder to be their *Liaison* as a mentor and an advocate. The Clerk of Session then fills out Form 2a and mails it along with Form 1 to the Stated Clerk of Presbytery who reviews the application for completeness and forwards it to the Chair of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). The CPM then votes to recommend to Presbytery that the person be enrolled with PC (USA) as an *Inquirer* and appoints a *CPM Liaison* to mentor that person and advocate for them at the Presbytery level.
***3.* Inquiry Phase**
During the "inquiry" period, (usually two years) the person explores the implications of becoming a minister together with the Session and the presbytery committee.  They usually enter seminary and begin their coursework while they continue to discern their call to ministry with help of their Liaison. This includes filling out an annual review form and meeting with CPM, as well as completing an official psychological examination by an approved psychologist. The purpose of the steps taken during Inquiry phase is to determine the person's suitability for ordination as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament.
***4.* Candidacy Phase**
At the end of this phase, the Inquirer must demonstrate personal faith, a sense of self-understanding, an understanding of the Reformed tradition, what it means to be Presbyterian, and an understanding of the task of being a minister. They would then apply to the Presbytery to become a *Candidate* and meet with their Session. If Session agrees, they forward the application along with Form X to CPM who would schedule a meeting with the Inquirer to review their status. If CPM is satisfied, they would recommend to Presbytery that the Inquirer come before Presbytery at the next scheduled meeting to be “moved up” to Candidate. If the presbytery is satisfied, the person becomes a "candidate" for ministry. During this phase, full and intensive preparation occurs under scrutiny of the Session and the CPM, including continued discernment, two internships and application to CPM to take the Ordination Exams (must have completed 36 units of seminary coursework).Routinely, candidates have a college undergraduate degree (usually four years) and complete a graduate level seminary degree (usually three years, if attending full-time). In addition, candidates must pass five national exams that demonstrate their competence in the fields: Bible Content, Theology, Bible Exegesis (plus sermon outline); Church Polity, and Worship and Sacraments.

 **Required Internships**

Riverside Presbytery requires two separate, supervised internships from Candidates.

* Church: One is an internship in a church setting that is supervised by an ordained pastor, usually overseen by a professor at the Candidate’s seminary. Criteria would include a wide array of involvement in the life of the church planning, leading and participating in: Worship (including preaching and funerals), Christian Education; Pastoral Visitation, special projects, events, or assignments that would expose the Candidate to the responsibilities and realities and of parish ministry.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE): This is a chaplaincy internship that can be done full-time for 3 months; or part-time for 9-months and is overseen by a Certified CPE Supervisor in an Accredited APCE Program. It can be done in a hospital setting or through a hospice care agency and involves additional classroom time and written assignments. Candidates apply for a program with guidance from their seminary and will usually receive college credit. A written final assessment from their CPE Supervisor is forwarded to CPM as part of their application to be *Certified Ready*.
***5.* Whew! I Passed My Ordination Exams! Now What?**
Working with their Liaison, the candidate completes an application to be *Certified Ready to Receive A Call*and sends it with their Ordination Exam results, seminary transcripts, and CPE Assessment. The candidate then meets with CPM and, after presenting a written personal statement of faith and preaching a prepared sermon to them, is recommended to Presbytery to be *Certified Ready to Receive A Call.*The Candidate appears before Presbytery at its next scheduled meeting and is verbally examined to be Certified Ready to Receive a Call.
***6.* Certified Ready to Receive a Call**
When the Candidate is approved to be Certified Ready to Receive a Call, they will then, with the help of their Liaison, prepare their PIF (Personal Information Form) and upload it on the PC(USA) website in order to be matched up with churches that are looking for a minister. The content of the Form and the method of preparing it will be explained by CPM at the appropriate time. Then it will be put on the PC(USA) website and interested church search committees will contact the Candidate directly and arrange interviews, meetings, etc. It is important for the Candidate to continue to work with their CPM Liaison during this time to further discern where they feel called, get feedback, and give updates on their search. This phase can take anywhere from 1 month – 1 year.
***7.* Becoming Ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.**
When the candidate receives a valid call to ministry, and the Terms of Call are approved by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (COM), the Presbytery then ordains that person to the office of Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA). Only a presbytery may ordain a minister, not a congregation. After ordination, they are installed (if a permanent position) to their position in that specific church body.

***It is a long and winding road to become ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA), but God and many supportive people will walk with you on your journey and you will be helped by lots of prayer and caring from others.***

***God’s blessings to you if you are feeling led to step onto the path to become a Presbyterian minister. It is a challenging, but rewarding journey to serve Jesus Christ and his Church.***

***Your gifts are greatly needed.***