

Approved June 4, 2002

**RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR COMMISSIONED LAY PASTORS
WORKING WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF LONG ISLAND**

The Book of Order (G-14.0800) states:

The commissioned lay pastor is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service. **(SEE GUIDELINES #1 AND #2)** This commission is valid only in one or more congregations, new church development, or other validated ministries of the presbytery designated by the presbytery. **(SEE GUIDELINE #3)**

Such an elder is selected by and receives training approved by the presbytery. The elder shall be instructed in

Bible
Reformed Theology and Sacraments
Presbyterian Polity
Preaching
Leading Worship
Pastoral care, and
Teaching.

(SEE GUIDELINE #6)

The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously. **(SEE GUIDELINE #8)** An elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in a particular congregation may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a commissioned lay pastor until approved again to a particular congregation by the presbytery.

The Commission shall be valid for a period up to three years as determined by the presbytery. It may be renewed at expiration or terminated at any time at the discretion of the presbytery. **(SEE GUIDELINE #4)** Presbytery shall regularly provide resources for the person's spiritual and intellectual development. A review of the work of the commissioned lay pastor shall be conducted annually. Presbytery shall revoke the commission of any lay pastor who does not abide by these provisions or whose work is evaluated as not adequate to meet the needs of the particular congregation or the presbytery.

When a presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and after additional instruction deemed necessary by the presbytery has been provided, a presbytery may authorize a commissioned lay pastor to perform any or all of the following functions described below **(SEE GUIDELINE #5)**:

Administer the Lord's Supper
Administer the Sacrament of Baptism.
Moderate the session of the congregation under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by presbytery.
Have a voice in meetings of presbytery.

We suggest that responsibility for this examination be lodged with the Committee on Ministry (COM).

Have a vote in meetings of the presbytery (such vote to be counted as an elder commissioner for purposes of parity).

Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state.

The commissioned lay pastor shall work under the supervision of the presbytery through the moderator of the session of the church being served or through the committee on ministry. A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

The presbytery, when it deems it to be in the best interest of the presbytery and the church involved, and when it deems that the lay pastor commissioned to that church is sufficiently trained in and loyal to Presbyterian polity, may appoint a lay pastor as moderator of session to the church in which she or he is commissioned. The person assigned to the commissioned lay pastor as mentor and supervisor shall also supervise his or her work as moderator. **(SEE GUIDELINE #7)**

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES:

1. The office of Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP) is authorized to provide ministry for congregations, or validated missions, which could not otherwise have pastoral leadership. Consequently, the Committee on Ministry will not consider appointing a Commissioned Lay Pastor in a church which has a pastor, interim pastor, stated supply, temporary supply, or any other minister in a regular relationship.
2. Normally the COM will not consider placement of a CLP in a congregation unless there is no reasonable possibility of service by an ordained minister.
3. A session, or other responsible body, after consultation with the COM and with prior permission of the COM, may make a formal request for the appointment of a CLP.
4. If there is compensation to the CLP, this must be approved by the COM.
5. The COM will determine in each appointment of a CLP which pastoral functions will be permitted to the CLP [G- 14.0801c(1-6)].
6. An applicant as a CLP must demonstrate to the COM how he/she has met the training requirements of the Form of Government. The COM does not provide this training, but will assist an interested person in meeting this requirement.
7. The COM will appoint a minister as supervisor for any CLP. There should be regular and frequent meetings between the CLP and the supervisor, and regular and frequent reports to the COM.
8. A CLP must be an active member of a congregation in the Presbytery of Long Island and an elder.