



**CHEROKEE**

**PRESBYTERY**

Cultivate. Support. Facilitate.

# Commission on Ministry Handbook

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## **Section 1: Commission on Ministry (COM)**

### **A. Introduction**

This Handbook sets out the policies and practices supporting Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs), those certified for church service (G-2.1101-2.1103) in Cherokee Presbytery, and resourcing congregational leaders as they transition between pastoral leaders.

Any amendments to this Handbook shall be approved by the Presbytery, on recommendation by the COM. Any changes mandated by action of the General Assembly shall be added or edited as required.

### **B. From the Cherokee Presbytery *Manual of Administrative Operations*:**

The Commission on Ministry shall have no fewer than six (6) members including the Moderator. The Moderator will not ordinarily have liaison responsibilities and will oversee the work of the Commission. The Commission is composed of ministers and elders in numbers as nearly equal as possible, and sufficient to accomplish their work.

The Commission is responsible for those duties outlined below and other such duties identified by *The Book of Order*, G-2.05, 2.07-2.11 and G-3.0306-3.0307 and not assigned to other Units and Commissions. The Commission on Ministry shall report its actions to each Stated Meeting of Presbytery. The Commission on Ministry shall elect a Moderator (or Co-Moderators) and a Clerk from its membership.

The duties shall consist of:

1. Review and approve initial Terms of Call for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.
2. Receive annual reports on ministerial Terms of Call from each congregation.
3. Dissolve pastoral relations when the Minister of the Word and Sacrament and congregation concur.
4. Dismiss Ministers of the Word and Sacrament to other presbyteries.
5. Approve and review temporary pastoral contracts, including Interim positions.
6. Grant requests from Ministers of the Word and Sacrament for release from exercise of ordered Ministry with the reasons for such release recorded in the minutes of the Presbytery.
7. Approve calls of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament moving within the Presbytery.
8. Grant status of Member-at-Large or Honorably Retired to Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.
9. Perform the initial in-depth examination of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament seeking membership in the Presbytery. Upon the satisfactory completion of this in-depth examination, a Minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be a member of Cherokee Presbytery and introduced at the next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery.
10. Review requests for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament of other Presbyteries to labor within the bounds of Cherokee Presbytery, and ministers of other denominations to serve in temporary pastoral relationships.
11. Review requests for commissioning Ruling Elders eligible for pastoral service, and recommend to Presbytery. Annually review the status and Terms of Call of Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs) (G-2.1001) and report to Presbytery.

12. Approve Administrative Commissions to install Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and approve services of recognition for Certified Christian Educators and other Certified Church Personnel. Ordinarily, commissioning of Ruling Elders to particular pastoral service will be held during a meeting of the Presbytery.
13. Appoint moderators of sessions for congregations without an installed pastor.
14. Designate persons to moderate session and congregational meetings when requested to do so by the Moderator of Record.
15. Maintain a Pulpit Supply List.
16. Develop and recommend policies that meet the emerging needs of the Presbytery, within the areas of responsibility of the Team.
17. Annually review the status of members at-large (G-2.0503b) with a report to Presbytery.
18. Establish minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and Certified and Associate Certified Christian Educators within the presbytery. (G-3.0303c).
19. Annually review the work of all Ministers of the Word and Sacrament engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation (G-2.0503a).
20. Identify, support, and guide congregations in times of missional discernment and congregational conflict with appropriate resources.
21. Identify and coordinate resources of best practices for congregational health.
22. Develop and promote policies that protect the health and welfare of Presbytery's leaders and the children within Presbytery congregations and ministries.
  - a. Annually review a Sexual Misconduct Policy and a Child Safety Policy.
  - b. Provide interpretation and training for Minister members and congregational leaders for these policies.
23. Provide support for pastors in crisis through available resources and referrals.

### C. **Leadership and Administrative Practices of the Commission on Ministry**

1. The leadership of the COM shall be determined by the COM. The Moderator or Co-Moderators and a Clerk shall be elected by the COM.
2. Liaisons to work with congregations in transition shall be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of COM. Training will be provided to liaisons by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of COM and the General Presbyter.
  - a. Additional liaisons may be recruited from former members of the COM.
  - b. Liaisons will be given training in the use of the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) system as they work with congregations to call a pastoral leader. Codes and passwords for each search will be provided to Liaisons by the COM Moderator/Co-Moderators.
3. The COM works closely with the Stated Clerk to ensure the correct status of minister members, CCEs, and CREs as reported to the Office of the General Assembly.
4. COM provides the Presbytery Office with copies of signed and approved contracts for Stated Supply Pastors, Interim Pastors, CCEs, and CREs. COM reviews each contract for fair compensation and time required for the Pastoral Leader to perform their Ministry as negotiated with the congregation.
5. As needed, COM approves Administrative Commissions to ordain and/or install Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, approves liturgy for recognition and celebration of Certified Christian Educators and other personnel certified by the PC(USA), and leads the liturgy at Presbytery meetings to commission Ruling Elders to particular pastoral service.

The makeup of these Administrative Commissions and the date and time of the worship service where the ordination and/or installation will take place shall be conveyed to the Moderator/Co-Moderators as soon as possible, so that COM might approve the Commission. The Commission shall meet before the worship service where the Pastor is being ordained and/or installed. Minutes shall be taken by a Clerk elected by the Commission as part of its business and forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.

6. COM will appoint moderators of sessions for congregations without a pastor. The COM Moderator/Co-Moderators shall be notified when this is necessary. No session may conduct official business without a duly appointed Moderator present.
7. COM shall establish minimum compensation standards for Pastoral Leaders, CCEs, and CREs within the presbytery (G-3.0303c). COM will review the adequacy of compensation and recommend changes at the last Stated Meeting of the Presbytery each year.

## **Section 2: Pastoral Relationships with Congregations**

### **A. Introduction**

There are two types of pastoral relationships with congregations: Temporary and Installed. Pastoral relationships in congregations are established by three parties: the Presbytery, the Session (for temporary positions), or the congregation (for installed positions) and the person serving in the pastoral role. Pastoral Leaders may be Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, or Ruling Elders eligible to be commissioned to pastoral service (CREs). Ministers from other denominations, especially those within the Formula of Agreement (G-5.0202), may be considered.

### **B. Temporary Pastoral Relationships**

Many churches are unable to support a full-time Installed Pastor. In this case, they may wish to engage a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, Candidate, or Ruling Elder eligible to be commissioned to pastoral service (CRE) in a temporary pastoral relationship. The number of hours and the duties of these Pastoral Leaders shall be negotiated by the session and the Pastoral Leader, and approved by the COM.

1. Types of Temporary Pastoral Relationships include:

#### **a. Pulpit Supply**

- 1) COM maintains a list, offered through the Presbytery office, of those who may be called upon to lead worship on an "as needed" basis.
- 2) The congregation engaging in Pulpit Supply shall offer at least \$200.00 per Sunday plus IRS mileage at the current business rate. Other services (teaching, moderating session, etc.) may be performed at an agreed-upon rate. COM suggests \$50 to moderate a session meeting and \$75 per class to teach.
- 3)

#### **b. Stated Supply Pastor**

- 1) A Stated Supply Pastor performs many of the same functions as an Installed Pastor, on a contracted basis. Prior to beginning a search for a Stated Supply Pastor, the Session shall inform the COM. The search for a Stated Supply Pastor is conducted by a Pastor Search

Team (PST) appointed by the Session. COM will provide the Session and its Pastor Search Team with training and a Liaison from COM to assist them in this search.

- 2) As final candidates are identified, the General Presbyter shall conduct an "executive check" with the Presbytery Leader of the Pastoral Leader's current presbytery, if the pastoral candidate is not currently a member of Cherokee Presbytery. If the executive check is affirmative, the Pastor Search Team may proceed to call their final candidate.
- 3) After a Stated Supply Pastor has been identified and an offer has been accepted and approved by the Session, and a contract signed, the decision shall be shared with the COM who will consider and take action on the temporary pastoral relationship. If the candidate is not a member of Cherokee Presbytery, it is ordinarily expected that they will become a member of the presbytery. COM will convene a Clearance Interview Team for this purpose.
- 4) The Stated Supply Pastor requires a job description with the hours and specific services they are expected to offer.
- 5) A Stated Supply Pastor contract shall not exceed 12 months. It may be dissolved by the Pastor or the Session with at least a 30-day notice, or as stipulated in the contract. The Stated Supply Pastor's contract may be renewed annually with Pastoral Leader, Session, and COM approval. The contract, including the job description and hours per week, is annually signed by the Stated Supply Pastor and the Session before being forwarded to the COM for action.
- 6) The effective salary and benefits are negotiated between the Stated Supply Pastor and the Session, with approval by the COM. These may include: annual cash salary, housing allowance, Minister's Choice or Pastor's Participation from the Board of Pensions, the Presbytery's Family Leave Plan, vacation of 4 weeks, continuing education of 2 weeks, other allowable leave as expected by the Presbytery, 1/2 SECA if applicable, and such reimbursable allowances or other benefits as may be agreed to with the Stated Supply Pastor.

### **c. Interim Pastor**

- 1) The Interim Pastor provides pastoral leadership during a season of pastoral transition. Prior to beginning a search for an Interim Pastor, the Session shall inform the COM. The search for an Interim Pastor is conducted by a Pastor Search Team (PST) appointed by the Session. COM will provide the Session and its Pastor Search Team with training and a liaison from COM to assist them in this search.
- 2) The Interim pastor requires a job description with the hours and specific services the Interim Pastor is expected to offer. The COM requires all Interim Pastors to perform a congregational mission study to inform the PNC as it searches for their next Pastoral Leader. If the congregation has performed a mission study within the past 3

years, the congregation may engage the COM to discuss ways to assess the future life and ministry of the congregation during a pastoral transition.

- 3) As final candidates are identified, the General Presbyter shall conduct an "executive check" with the Presbytery Leader of the Pastoral Leader's current presbytery, if the candidate is not currently a member of Cherokee Presbytery. If the executive check is affirmative, the Pastor Search Team may proceed to choose its final candidate.
- 4) After an Interim Pastor has been identified and an offer has been accepted and approved by the Session, the decision shall be shared with the COM who will consider and take action on the temporary pastoral relationship. If the candidate is not a member of Cherokee Presbytery, it is ordinarily expected that they will become a member of the presbytery. COM will convene a Clearance Interview Team for this purpose.
- 5) An Interim Pastor contract shall not exceed 12 months. It may be dissolved by the Pastor or the Session with at least a 30-day notice, or as stipulated in the contract. The Interim Pastor contract may be renewed for one additional 12-month term with the concurrence of the Interim Pastor, Session, and COM. In extraordinary circumstances, an Interim Pastor contract may be extended past the second, 12-month term, in consultation with the COM. The contract, including the job description and number of hours per week, is annually signed by the Interim Pastor and the Session before being forwarded to the COM for its action.
- 6) The effective salary and benefits are negotiated between the Interim Pastor and the Session, with approval by the COM. These may include: annual cash salary, housing allowance, Minister's Choice or Pastor's Participation, Family Leave, vacation of 4 weeks, continuing education of 2 weeks, other allowable leave as expected by the presbytery, 1/2 SECA if applicable, and such reimbursable allowances or other benefits as may be agreed to with the Interim Pastor.

#### **d. Bridge Pastor**

- 1) A Bridge Pastor (full or part time) may be an option to bridge the gap between the departure of a Pastoral Leader and the arrival of the next Pastoral Leader. Ordinarily, a Bridge Pastor's contract will not exceed 90 days. The Bridge Pastor will not begin any of the interim tasks or the mission study. The Bridge Pastor will simply maintain worship and administrative operations within the church.
- 2) The contract and effective salary and benefits are negotiated between the Bridge Pastor and the Session, with approval by the COM.

### **C. Installed Pastoral Relationships**

1. An **Installed Pastor** is usually a full-time Minister of the Word and Sacrament (35 hours a week) but may also be part-time as agreed to by all three parties (Pastor,

Congregation, COM). Congregations call Installed Pastors to Ministry with them and Installed Pastors are elected by a vote of the congregation. Terms of Call shall meet or exceed the Presbytery's minimum effective salary (cash salary and housing allowance), and include participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly. Additional benefits to be part of the Terms of Call: the Presbytery's Family Leave Plan, vacation of 4 weeks, continuing education of 2 weeks, other allowable leave as expected by the presbytery, 1/2 SECA if applicable, and such reimbursable allowances or other benefits as negotiated with the Pastor.

2. A **Designated Pastor** relationship may be utilized during seasons of church transformation, upon recommendation of an Administrative Commission, or in situations where the congregation has gone through a significant event (conflict or death of a pastor, split in the congregation, etc.), or if determined necessary by the COM. This relationship shall be for a designated term: no less than two years or more than four years, and is an installed position, subject to all full or part-time benefits requirements for any installed position. The term is renewable, upon review by the Pastor, Session/Administrative Commission, and with approval of the COM.

At the end of each term, the COM shall make one of the following recommendations:

- a. extend the Designated Pastor's call;
- b. call the Designated Pastor as the installed pastor; or
- c. begin a new call process in which the Designated Pastor is not ordinarily eligible to participate.

### **Section 3: Pastoral Relationships Outside Congregations**

- A. **Validated Ministers** engaged in Ministry outside a congregation, such as Chaplains, Seminary Professors, Missionaries, PC(USA) National Staff, etc., must have this Ministry validated annually by the COM and reported to the Presbytery. Such Ministry may be inside or outside the bounds of the Presbytery, but any work within the geographic bounds of another Presbytery and within the responsibility of that Presbytery must have the consent of that Presbytery.
- B. **Members-at-Large** are those who have previously been engaged in a validated Ministry and are no longer serving in such capacity but are not Honorably Retired. They are expected to perform as many responsibilities as possible as defined in G-2.0503a., be part of a congregation's life, and take an active part in the life and Ministry of the Presbytery. COM is responsible for reviewing the Ministry of Members-at-Large each year, according to the expectations of G-2.0503b. and reporting these to the Presbytery.
- C. **Honorably Retired** status is so designated by COM on behalf of the Presbytery and is usually granted upon request of the Minister Member. They may continue to serve the Presbytery in many ways including pulpit supply, moderator of a session, as Interim or Supply Pastor, serving on Ministry Units of the Presbytery, etc. COM reports these actions to the Presbytery and joyfully honors these Honorably Retired ministers.



## **Section 4: Beginnings and Endings of Pastoral Relationships**

### **A. Introduction**

The pastoral relationship is a three-party covenant between the Pastoral Leader, the Session or congregation, and the Presbytery. All three parties must concur before the pastoral relationship may be established or dissolved.

### **B. Beginnings of Pastoral Relationships**

1. In installed relationships, the Congregation calls the Pastoral Leader to Ministry with them, with affirmation of the Presbytery. A service of Ordination and/or Installation with congregational and Presbytery representatives celebrates the beginning of that relationship.
2. In the case of temporary pastoral relationships, no Installation service takes place. Cherokee Presbytery has established a "Rite of Beginning Ministry Litany" for one of the first days the Pastoral Leader leads worship. The General Presbyter and a representative of COM will be present to be part of that Litany, as a visible reminder of the three-party covenant between the Pastor, the Congregation, and the Presbytery.

### **C. Endings of Pastoral Relationships**

The dissolution of an installed pastoral relationship may be initiated by the Pastoral Leader, the congregation, or the Presbytery. A departing Pastoral Leader shall notify the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the COM and the General Presbyter before notifying the Session and the congregation of their departure. After notification, the COM Moderator/Co-Moderators will assign a Liaison. If the dissolution involves an Associate Pastor, the Pastoral Leader serving as Head of Staff and the Clerk of Session should be notified prior to notifying the Session and the congregation.

Unless there are disciplinary considerations, the duration of a minister's tenure along with the impact of their Ministry should be considered in developing an exit strategy that allows a Ministry to end with intention and a sense of completeness. To that end, specific Ministry resolution goals and timelines will be explored, agreed upon, and implemented as a part of the terms of dissolution.

#### **1. Types of Dissolution**

- a. Voluntary dissolution at the request of the Pastoral Leader
- b. Negotiated Departure. Either the Pastoral Leader or the Session may request that the COM assist in negotiating a peaceful and appropriate end to a relationship which either the Pastoral Leader or Session believe is no longer workable. (See Section 4.a below)
- c. Medical Disability or Incapacitation
- d. Death in Service
- e. Dissolution for Cause
- f. Renunciation: If a Pastoral Leader renounces the jurisdiction of this church in writing, dissolution is effective immediately. No severance payments or monetary gifts shall be made to a Pastoral Leader who renounces jurisdiction.

## **2. Process for Dissolving an Installed Pastoral Relationship**

- a. The Session, Administrative Commission (if there is one in place) or Pastoral Leader shall contact the General Presbyter before notifying the Session and the congregation, stating the desire to sever the relationship and provide a brief overview of the reasons. The General Presbyter will then inform the Stated Clerk and the COM.
- b. The COM will respond with the appropriate resource persons and a Liaison to meet with all parties to discuss the presbytery's policy on dissolution.
- c. The Session and/or Administrative Commission, Pastor, and COM negotiate, approve, and sign a written Dissolution Agreement, Covenant of Closure, or, if applicable, a Severance Agreement which includes a Dissolution Agreement and Covenant of Closure.
- d. Copies of the written Dissolution Agreement and Covenant of Closure are to be made available to members of the congregation at the Congregational Meeting at which the dissolution of the call is to be determined.
- e. The Congregation votes to request the Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship, affirming the written Dissolution Agreement and Covenant of Closure at the Congregational Meeting. It is recommended that the Congregational Meeting be moderated by a member of the COM, the General Presbyter, or the Stated Clerk. No party at the Congregational Meeting may amend the severance terms if a severance is agreed to by all parties.
- f. Both the Pastoral Leader and the Congregation, having agreed on the terms, present them to the COM to approve the dissolution through the Dissolution Agreement and Covenant of Closure on behalf of Cherokee Presbytery. If either the Pastoral Leader or the congregation does not concur with the terms of dissolution, they shall inform the General Presbyter the reasons why the pastoral relationship should not be dissolved. The Presbytery shall make a determination on the pastoral relationship.

## **3. Process for Dissolving Temporary Pastoral Relationships**

- a. In temporary pastoral relationships, the Session or the Pastoral Leader makes a request to the presbytery through COM to end the pastoral relationship.
- b. Temporary pastoral relationships end on the date of the approved contract or on a date agreed to by the Session and the Pastor and affirmed by the COM. A written Dissolution Agreement and Covenant of Closure will be affirmed by the Pastoral Leader, Clerk of Session, and COM.
- c. Cherokee Presbytery has established a Rite of Ending Ministry; the sample Litany is to be used close to the final day a Pastoral Leader is in the pulpit.

## **4. Guidelines for Negotiated Departure for Installed Pastoral Relationships**

- a. Overview
  - 1) The Pastoral Leader and/or the Session may make the request for a negotiated departure; the Presbytery may initiate proceedings for dissolution. The COM will appoint two persons: one to work with the Session, and the other to work with the Pastoral Leader to negotiate the terms of dissolution. The Pastoral Leader and Session may each name two persons to assist in the negotiation of the terms of dissolution. Those so named will constitute a Departure Negotiation Task Force.

- 2) The representatives of the Pastoral Leader will meet with them to discuss terms of dissolution. Likewise, the representatives of the Session will meet with them to discuss terms of dissolution. Following those meetings, the Departure Negotiation Task Force will be convened.
- b. Agreement of Proposed Terms of the Dissolution
- 1) After the Task Force has agreed upon terms of dissolution acceptable to both parties, they present the proposed terms of dissolution to the Session in writing.
  - 2) While it is hoped that terms of dissolution are unanimously acceptable to all parties would be negotiated, a majority of the Task Force may present a proposal to the Session, Pastor, and COM.
  - 3) When the terms of dissolution are approved by the Pastor and the Congregation, they shall be signed by the Pastor and by the Clerk of Session. The Clerk shall then send a signed copy of the terms of dissolution to the COM for its approval.
- c. Considerations regarding the Dissolution
- 1) Every agreement shall address compensation and benefits to support the minister until the minister has entered into a comparable call or secular employment and the Session moves toward bridge or interim leadership.
  - 2) Ordinarily, cash salary, housing allowance or use of a manse, utilities, and Board of Pensions payments are to be continued for a minimum of three months after the effective date of dissolution.  
However, the length of the pastor's service to the church may also be taken into consideration. In the event a manse is involved, the date of departure from the manse shall be part of the Dissolution Agreement. On that date, the pastor shall return all keys and shall surrender the premises to the church.

## **5. Severance Agreement**

Severance is defined as compensation a congregation provides a Pastoral Leader who is leaving under duress. No law requires a congregation to offer severance pay. In Georgia, Pastoral Leaders may not apply for unemployment compensation from the state unless the church participates in paying unemployment insurance. Pastoral Leaders may have severance details built into their contracts. The congregation is responsible for payment of severance, if negotiated, and such severance is not the responsibility of the Presbytery or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) In considering severance pay, service is measured within the particular call, not total years of service. All severance agreements should be fully documented and approved by Congregation, Pastor, and Presbytery.

## **6. Covenant of Closure**

An agreement between the departing Pastor, the Session, and the COM shall be established to define the parameters of a pastor's relationship with the session and congregation following their departure in all pastoral relationships.

## **Section 5: Certified Church Service**

### **A. Introduction**

Persons serving in certain staff positions in congregations, councils, and church-related entities, may be certified and called to service in these positions. Through

their service, they reflect their faith, and strengthen the church through their dedication. Persons serving in these staff positions should be encouraged to meet certification requirements of a national certifying body approved by the General Assembly. The Presbytery shall encourage sessions to provide continuing education funds and time for persons seeking certification. The Presbytery shall affirm these certified persons with a service of recognition at the time of certification.

Persons in certified service taking new positions shall be recognized and welcomed at Presbytery meetings. Persons so certified shall be granted the privilege of voice at all meetings of Presbytery while serving in a congregation, council, or church-related entity. Ruling Elders so certified shall be granted the privilege of voice and vote at all meetings of Presbytery while serving in a congregation, council, or church-related entity.

The Presbytery shall recognize retirement of persons so certified. Regardless of position title or place of service (camp, congregation, etc.), certified persons should retain their status with all rights and privileges.

Sessions and congregations shall encourage participation in, and support of, the Association of Partners in Christian Educators (APCE), the Presbyterian Church Business Administrators (PCBA), the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM), and other entities providing certification.

The General Presbyter shall be notified in advance when an employment relationship with a certified person in service is begun or ended, and then inform COM. Such certified persons shall be included in the annual necrology report.

## **B. Christian Educators**

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the Ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training sufficient for their work, including polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian educators and Certified Associate Christian educators, as well as access to the COM. Compensation and employment benefits including sabbatical should be equal to that of a Pastoral Leader in a similar call.

COM shall provide guidance and support to congregations seeking to call persons within the field of Christian education, and to help congregations discern whether a position could be best filled by a Certified Christian educator, Certified Associate Christian educator, or a Pastoral Leader.

The General Presbyter shall be notified in advance when an employment relationship with a Certified or Associate Certified Christian educator is begun or ended, and then inform COM. Certified and Associate Certified Christian Educators shall be included in the annual necrology report.

## **Section 6: Commissioned Ruling Elders**

### **A. Introduction**

The Presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as determined by the Presbytery. Such commission may be to a validated Ministry, and the ruling elder may be authorized to moderate the session, administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. The commissions shall state the term of service, not to exceed three years, and shall be renewable. The COM will review the commission annually. The initial commissioning of a ruling elder to particular pastoral service shall be at a stated or called meeting of the Presbytery.

### **B. Training, Examination, Commissioning, and Supervision**

1. The Building Leaders Team (BLT) of Cherokee Presbytery shall establish preparation and instruction standards for Ruling Elders who seek to become CREs.
2. CRE candidates are prepared and approved by BLT for commissioning. COM will examine CRE candidates as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of their instruction.
3. Approved ruling elders will be commissioned to limited pastoral service at a stated or called meeting of the Presbytery.
4. CREs shall work under the supervision of the COM, who shall assign a minister of the Word and Sacrament to serve as mentor to the CRE.
5. CREs will complete and submit an Annual Report to COM for its review. Prior to the end of the term, the COM will review and make recommendations about the renewal of the CRE Commission.