



SALEM PRESBYTERY

PC(USA)

Commissioned Ruling Elder Manual

Revised 1 June 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Part I: Becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder.....	1
Part II: Education	3
Part III: Serving as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in a Church.....	4
Part IV: CRE Annual Evaluation and Contract Renewal.....	5
Part V: Mentoring.....	5
Part VI: Performing Weddings.....	6
Appendix A: Application.....	A-1
Appendix B: Personal Information Form.....	B-1
Appendix C: Commissioned Ruling Elder Contract.....	C-1
Appendix D: CRE Mutual Ministry Review	D-1
Appendix E: Study & Practice Questions.....	E-1
Appendix F: Installation of a Commissioned Ruling Elder.....	F-1
Appendix G: Certification to Perform Weddings	G-1

Introduction

The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) provides for the commissioning of Ruling Elders to specific pastoral service (G-2.10). It is the responsibility of the Presbytery to determine the need, use, preparation of and placement of these Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE).

A ruling elder who seeks to serve as a CRE will receive preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery. The Presbytery can authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law.

Commissioned Ruling Elders are commissioned for a term of service not to exceed three years, but their commission is renewable. The congregation, the CRE and the presbytery shall review and renew the contract annually.

In Salem Presbytery, the Commission on Ministry (COM) is responsible for the Commissioned Ruling Elder program. It performs this responsibility through its Commissioned Ruling Elder Oversight Sub-Committee.

It is the intention of the COM to have consistent Presbyterian pastoral leadership in every congregation. Ordinarily that leadership is provided by an ordained Presbyterian Minister of Word and Sacrament. When that is not practical or possible, the COM's goal is to enable such congregations to have temporary supplies who are ordained Presbyterian Ministers or Commissioned Ruling Elders.

Part I: Becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder

Step I

The Session of the home church must endorse the CRE candidate and be certain the individual meets the requirements in the Book of Order. The Session assesses the candidate to determine if he or she has sufficient background and insight into Presbyterian polity and theology to be an authentic representative of our denomination. Criteria that supports this are the length of time the person has been a Presbyterian and the number of years served as an ordained elder. The candidate is examined as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and his or her sense of call. The Session must answer the question, "Would I want this person to be my pastor?" The candidate must be made aware of the academic requirements of the training program, and also understand that all who enter might not succeed in being commissioned. During the entire process that follows, the candidate must continue to prayerfully discern his or her call.

Step II

The CRE candidate shall complete the "Commissioned Ruling Elder Program Application" including the endorsement of the Session (Appendix A) and submit it to the CRE Oversight Sub-Committee at the offices of Salem Presbytery.

Step III

The CRE Oversight Sub-Committee will interview the candidate about his or her faith, sense of call, personal suitability and commitment, intellectual insight, understanding of Presbyterian polity and theology, and fitness for ministry. Upon successful completion of this interview, the candidate is entered into the CRE program.

Step IV

The CRE candidate begins the required coursework.

Step V

After about one year of study, the CRE candidate is given a field education assignment with a minister in Salem Presbytery. Field education involves working with and under the tutelage of the minister mentor, and will include some preaching, attendance at Session meetings and other appropriate assignments. Field education is for a minimum of one year but might be more if appropriate.

Step VI

Upon completion of coursework and field education, the candidate is interviewed by the CRE Oversight Sub-Committee to determine if the candidate is ready to serve a church. The Sub-Committee decides if the candidate is ready to serve, if the candidate needs additional coursework or field education, or if the candidate is not suited to serve a church as pastor.

Step VII

Candidates ready for service are approved for placement on the pulpit supply list and considered for placement in a church in Salem Presbytery by COM.

Step VIII

The COM and the CRE Oversight Sub-Committee reviews those churches where a pastoral vacancy exists. If a church is open to the placement of a CRE, the CRE Sub-Committee submits resumes of eligible candidates who live within a reasonable distance of the church.

Step IX

The Session of the church seeking a pastor interviews prospective candidates. If the Session wants to call one of those candidates, they notify the COM.

Step X

The Session of the church extending the call and the CRE, in consultation with the CRE Sub-Committee, prepares the Commissioned Ruling Elder Contract (Appendix B). The terms of this contract are in keeping with this manual and the minimum salary guidelines of Salem Presbytery.

Step XI

The candidate submits a statement of faith, faith journey, and a sermon to the Examinations Committee and is scheduled for their examination.

Step XII

If the examination is successful, the candidate is assigned a minister mentor to serve as a colleague and advisor.

Step XIII

The CRE is commissioned by Salem Presbytery. This commission ordinarily includes the approval to administer the sacraments and moderate the Session.

Part II: Education

Coursework for the CRE program can be done through the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary on-line program, through Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary, or other approved institutions or Presbyteries. The coursework typically takes two years to complete.

If the candidate has previous theological training, the CRE Oversight Sub-Committee may evaluate that training to determine if it meets some or all of the requirements.

Coursework includes:

Biblical Interpretation

This course provides an introduction to the Old and New Testaments with a broad focus on content, historical background, theology, and significance for the life of faith. The course also provides an introduction to scholarly, practical and pastoral approaches to interpretation of Scripture.

Preaching

This course leads the student through the basic steps of sermon preparation: liturgical consideration, text selection, exegesis, formation of a claim, development of a sermon outline and choice of a form, sermon writing, delivery, and evaluation.

Christian Education

This course introduces students to the teaching ministries of the church as a means to call and shape disciples. Attention is given to not only teaching in traditional programs such as church school, but to other opportunities, both inside and outside the church, for building up the whole body of Christ in the Christian faith.

Presbyterian Polity

This course provides an overview of Presbyterian Church (USA) polity, both in principle and in practice. There is an emphasis on the use of the Book of Order as it applies to the local congregation as well as other governing bodies.

Pastoral Care

This course introduces the student to the caring aspects of pastoral ministry, including biblical and theological foundations of care, the development of pastoral identity, various models of care, and varieties of essential pastoral communication skills necessary for entering diverse situations of crisis and need.

Reformed Theology

This course introduces the theology of the Reformed tradition which is the branch of Protestant Christianity birthed in the 16th century Reformation and strongly influenced by John Calvin.

Reformed Worship and Sacraments

This course introduces basic scriptural, historical, and theological principles of Christian worship and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Focus is also on liturgical practice in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Church History

This class examines the history of the Christian Church, with emphasis on the Reformation and development of the Presbyterian Church in America. The class investigates how revivalism, education, foreign and domestic missions, moral reform, politics, and war played a role in the history of the church.

Additional required training

Healthy Boundaries

This course equips ministers to understand the importance of healthy boundaries in ministry and to critically discern the complexities of boundaries in pastoral relationships. This course is offered periodically by Salem Presbytery. In the alternative, candidates may take the six week, online course with FaithTrust Institute and the Center of Progressive Renewal at their own expense.

Part III: Serving as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in a Church

When a Session calls a CRE to serve as their pastor, the terms of call outlined in the Commissioned Ruling Elder contract must be approved by the Committee on Ministry. The contract will be for one year. See the form of the CRE contract in Appendix B.

The CRE contract is ordinarily for thirty hours per week or less. When serving a two-church field, the total number of hours for both churches should not exceed thirty-five hours per week.

A CRE may be considered to be commissioned to pastoral service in a particular congregation to serve as a temporary supply in the absence of the installed pastor of that congregation.

Regular attendance at Presbytery meetings is expected for all CREs unless excused. A CRE serving a particular congregation has voice and vote in the meetings of Presbytery.

CREs are expected to regularly attend the CRE quarterly meetings conducted by the Presbytery unless excused.

CREs fulfill all requirements for Healthy Boundary training and retraining.

CREs are encouraged to participate in at least two continuing education events during each calendar year. These can be retreats, conferences or learning opportunities provided by Salem Presbytery.

An Elder serving as a CRE in a congregation other than the congregation in which his or her membership is located remains on the active roll of the church of which he or she is a member. CREs are encouraged to remain in good standing with the sponsoring congregation.

CREs can be re-commissioned by the Presbytery for an additional three-year period upon obtaining or renewing a valid contract for service with a particular church or churches.

Part IV: CRE Annual Evaluation and Contract Renewal

While Presbytery's Commission to serve as a CRE can be for a period of up to three years, the contract between the employing Session and the CRE is for no more than one year. The contract is reviewed and renewed annually, if appropriate.

Prior to the expiration of the current contract, the Session, the CRE and the CRE Mentor reviews the work of the CRE using the form provided by the COM. (Appendix C) Presbytery staff notifies mentors of the renewal dates for CRE contracts. For the evaluation process of CREs to be most effective, the CRE, the Mentor and the Session should meet together in person to conduct the evaluation.

The completed evaluation form and contract renewal is sent to COM for approval. Evaluations and contracts are maintained in the personnel files of Salem Presbytery.

Part V: Mentoring

An essential part of the CRE program is the mentoring component. From the time a person applies to enter the CRE program and throughout their ministry they have a minister mentor who serves as colleague, supporter, sounding board and guide.

From the time a person applies to enter the program, during their coursework and preparation, up until the time they receive a call to serve a congregation, the mentor is usually the minister of the CRE's home church.

Tasks of minister mentors before the CRE is commissioned include:

- Pray with and for CRE candidate
- Provide spiritual and moral support during the coursework period
- Discuss and review the candidate's coursework and provide feedback

- Provide additional assignments to bolster student's knowledge
- Assign two sermons for CRE candidate to write and preach, then provide feedback
- Provide worship leadership opportunities and provide feedback
- Encourage the candidate to attend Session meetings and Presbytery meetings
- Discuss what the candidate can expect when examined by the Examinations Committee

After being commissioned to serve a church, the CRE Oversight Sub-Committee assigns a minister mentor from within the Presbytery in the general area of the CRE's congregation.

Tasks of minister mentors after the CRE is commissioned and serving a church include:

- Pray with and for CRE and the CRE's congregation
- Meet regularly to discuss concerns the CRE has about his or her ministry
- Periodically review and discuss CRE's sermons
- Discuss and encourage continuing education opportunities
- Be available for questions and problems as they arise
- Be aware of and proactive in the renewal of the CRE contract and evaluation of the CRE

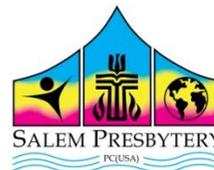
Part VI: Performing Weddings

The CRE may be certified by the Presbytery to perform wedding ceremonies within their congregations. This certification is necessary to properly equip a pastor to understand the theological implications and background of marriage, and also to satisfy the requirements of the State. This training and certification is in addition to the training and commissioning described above.

The training event for certification to perform weddings includes:

- Theological issues related to marriage
- Civil aspects
- The mechanics and logistics of a marriage service
- Pre-marital counseling

APPENDIX A
APPLICATION
COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER PROGRAM
SALEM PRESBYTERY



Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City State and Zip Code

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____

Cell: _____

Email address: _____

Present home church: _____

Year joined: _____ Year ordained an Elder: _____

Social security # _____ Date of Birth: _____

Ethnic Origin: _____ Sex: _____

Describe your activities in the life and mission of the Church.

Education and training: _____

Work experience: _____

I hereby apply for admission to the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program of Salem Presbytery. I understand that satisfactory completion of the training is a requirement of commissioning. I also understand that the completion of the training is not a guarantee that such a commission will be granted.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

STATEMENT OF INTEREST:

Please answer the following question in the space below.
Why do you want to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder?

SESSIONAL ENDORSEMENT

The Session of _____ endorses this applicant for the
Commissioned Ruling Elder Program of Salem Presbytery.

Moderator of Session

Date

Clerk of Session

Date

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Present your statement of interest and application to your Session.
2. Meet with the Session to secure their endorsement for the Commissioned Ruling Elder program.
3. Forward this completed application to: Commissioned Ruling Elder Program, Salem Presbytery, P. O. Box 1763, Clemmons, NC 27012.

APPENDIX B
Personal Information Form
Commissioned Ruling Elder

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Office Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Date of CRE training completion: _____

Date of initial commission by Salem Presbytery: _____

Current church membership: _____

Formal education: _____

Completed CRE Coursework: (attach transcript): _____

Assignments as Commissioned Ruling Elder to a Particular Congregation: _____

Type of position sought in Salem Presbytery: _____

Community types: Rural _____ Village _____ Town _____
Small to medium city _____ Suburban _____

Church size: Under 50 members _____ 50 - 100 members _____
101 - 250 members _____ 251 or more members _____

Languages spoken (in addition to English): _____

Past Experience: _____

Service to the church or denomination: _____

Accomplishments as a CRE previously: _____

References: _____

APPENDIX C
Commissioned Ruling Elder Contract

The Session of the _____ Presbyterian Church in _____, North Carolina is fully satisfied with your ministerial qualifications to lead and assist us in the fulfillment of our corporate and individual ministries and hereby contracts with you _____ to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE).

New Contract Renewal Contract

For the period of _____ months from _____ to _____.

During this time we expect you to perform the following services:

1. Conduct worship, which includes preaching and administration of the sacraments, and any special worship services, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.
() weekly () every other Sunday () all Sundays except the 5th Sunday
() other (Please specify) _____
2. Visit members of this congregation, especially during crises such as illness, divorce and death and conduct funerals.
3. Moderate and assist the Session under the Mentor supervision of _____ when planning, organizing, and carrying out programs of nurture, fellowship, service, stewardship, leadership training, and _____.
4. Other responsibilities: _____

The following guidelines may help the Session and CRE prioritize his/her use of time. Sermon preparation is non-negotiable, because 10 hours is the minimum time required for study, prayer and composition of a weekly sermon. The other allotments below are provided to serve as guidelines when considering the time needed to provide effective leadership to your congregation.

Guideline Tasks	Hours	Actual CRE Tasks	Hours
Sermon Preparation	10	Sermon Preparation	10
Worship Preparation	1	Worship Preparation	1
Sunday morning	3	Sunday morning	3
Administration	1	Administration	___
Pastoral Care	8	Pastoral Care	___
Session & other meetings	2	Session & other meetings	___
Special events	2	Special events	___
Other		Other	___

The Session estimates that fulfilling these duties will require _____ hours per week, not to exceed thirty (30) hours per week. The Session also is aware that the CRE will have a quarterly meeting with his/her mentor, and will attend CRE quarterly meetings and continuing education as appropriate.

The Session will maintain its individual and corporate duties in the government and discipline of the congregation and oversight of the Church's spiritual interests.

The Session promises and obligates itself to provide you with the following remuneration and benefits:

1. A salary of \$_____ per month. Of this monthly salary, 40% is designated as housing reimbursement.
(The parties understand that the above compensation ___ DOES or ___ DOES NOT meet the current CRE minimum compensation recommendations from Salem Presbytery.)
2. Reimbursement for travel on behalf of the church and its ministries will be provided at the current Federal Allowable Rate. The IRS will not allow for reimbursement of miles traveled between home and work.
3. Reimbursement for one-half of your Social Security, if you are not yet retired.
4. Continuing education and book allowance shall be no less than of \$150.00 per six months work or \$300 per year, to be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts.
5. Leave time
4 weeks vacation (2 weeks if 6 month contract);
2 weeks study leave (1 week if 6 month contract)
6. Other remuneration _____

This contract was agreed upon by the Session and Commissioned Ruling Elder on the following date: _____.

If your service continues for more than one year, the Session agrees to review this contract with you, your Mentor and the Committee on Ministry.

Signed by: _____
Clerk of Session
Commissioned Ruling Elder

Moderator of Committee on Ministry
Mentor/COM Member

One copy of this contract should be filed with the Session Minutes, one copy given to the Commissioned Ruling Elder, one to the Mentor, and one copy should be mailed to the following:

COM
Salem Presbytery
PO Box 1763
Clemmons, NC 27012

APPENDIX D
Salem Presbytery
CRE Mutual Ministry Review

This review is conducted by the Session of _____
and Commissioned Ruling Elder _____
and the CRE's mentor _____
on _____ (date).

This review is NOT a report card. It is a mechanism to review the ministry of the congregation, the Session and the CRE. It is also a tool to further discussion as the congregation moves forward in service to Jesus Christ. In each category there is an opportunity to assess the pastor, the Session and the congregation.

	Well done	Adequate	Needs improvement
1. Understanding of ministry			
Pastor demonstrates a clear understanding of responsibilities in this area:			
• preaching			
• administering the sacraments			
Session members demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities in this area:			
• stating the congregation's mission, conducting long-range planning, and evaluating the Session's activities			
• maintaining supportive relationships with the pastor and staff and assisting in annual evaluation of their ministries			
• modeling a faithful lifestyle			
The climate or culture of the congregation encourages members to use their gifts for ministry in the congregation and community.			
2. Caring for the needs of the congregation			
Pastor demonstrates a clear understanding of responsibilities in this area:			
• conducting worship			

	Well done	Adequate	Needs improvement
• providing pastoral care			
• visiting the sick and conducting funerals			
Session members demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities in this area:			
• seeking to involve all members of the congregation in congregational life			
• overseeing the administration of the congregation			
• keeping accurate records on baptisms, marriages, burials, and membership			
• arranging for pastoral services in the pastor's absence			
• handling the congregation's financial and property matters			
• submitting a comprehensive report at the annual meeting			
The climate or culture of the congregation encourages members to assume responsibilities and leadership roles and follow through on their commitments.			
3. Taking Christ's mission into the world			
Pastor demonstrates a clear understanding of responsibilities in this area:			
• speaking for poor and oppressed people, calling for justice, and proclaiming God's love for the world			
• encouraging qualified individuals to consider ordered ministry			
• encouraging the congregation to support the Presbytery and the churchwide organization			
Session members demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities in this area:			
• encouraging partnership with the Presbytery and the larger church body			
• inviting qualified individuals to consider ordered ministry			
Members of the congregation are willing to actively invite others to worship and other ministry			

	Well done	Adequate	Needs improvement
opportunities, serve non-members in the name of Christ, and carry out the work of Jesus Christ in the world today.			
4. Mutual ministry			
Pastor demonstrates a clear understanding of responsibilities in this area:			
• supervising staff members			
• communicating well with the Session			
• moderating the Session			
• caring for our mutual life together in ways that create a positive climate			
Session members demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities in this area:			
• communicating well with the pastor			
• caring for our mutual life together in ways that create a positive climate			
The climate or culture of the congregation encourages members to care for one another and for our mutual life together in ways that create a positive climate.			
5. Overall ratings			
Overall, the pastor is functioning effectively.			
Overall, the Session is functioning effectively.			
Overall, our congregation is functioning effectively.			

Comments: _____

CRE

Mentor

Clerk of Session

COM Moderator

APPENDIX E
Study & Practice Questions

Study Questions

1. What is the name of our denomination? Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
2. Who is the head of the church? Jesus Christ
3. What is the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?
4. What are the categories of membership? Baptized member, active member, inactive member, affiliate member.
5. What are the offices of the church? Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, Deacon
6. Must a church have all of them? No, by majority vote the congregation may do away with the office of Deacon. Those duties then devolve upon the Session.
7. Name the four governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in ascending order. Session, Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly
8. Who composes the Session? The Elders on active service together with the pastor, who is the moderator.
9. Who governs the particular congregation? The Session
10. Is the ordained Pastor a member of the congregation? No. Why?
11. What are the duties of an Elder? Strengthen and nurture the faith and life of the congregation, encourage people in worship and service of God, equip and renew the congregation, visit and comfort and care for the people, cultivate the ability to teach the Bible, and be available to supply places without regular ministry of the Word.
12. What authority does an Elder have as an individual? None, the authority is found in the governing body.
13. What is the name of our Presbytery? Salem
 - a. How often does it meet? Four times a year
 - b. What is its membership? All the ministers together with at least one Elder elected from every Session (1 for each 500 members). Additional Elders are elected so as to balance the number of resident minister members of the basis of a formula adopted annually by Presbytery.
 - c. Where is the office? Clemmons
14. What is the name of our Synod? The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
 - a. How often does it meet? Biennially
 - b. What is its membership? 1 Minister and 1 Elder elected by Presbytery for each 15,000 members (or major fraction thereof) of Presbytery's congregations.
 - c. Where is the office? Richmond, VA
15. What is the name of the General Assembly? The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 - a. How often does it meet? Biennially
 - b. How is the membership determined? 1 Minister and 1 Elder elected by Presbytery for each 10,000 members or major fraction thereof. Each Presbytery, regardless of size shall have at least 1 Minister and 1 Elder commissioner
 - c. Where is the office? Louisville, Ky.
16. Why do we worship on Sunday (the Lord's Day) instead of the Sabbath? (W-1.3011)
17. Can you keep a person from worshipping with you? (W-1.4003)

18. Why don't all Presbyterian Churches have the same order of worship? Whose responsibility is it? (W-1.4001 – 1.4009)
19. Is it all right for members to assist in the conduct of worship? (W-1.4003)
20. What is the function of a choir, if there is a choir? (W-2.1004)
21. Should you baptize a person in a private service? Who are the "god-parents" in the Presbyterian Church? (W-3.3601 – 3.3608) (W-2.3001 – 2.3014)
22. How often should the Lord's Supper be held? Who can assist in serving the Sacraments? (W-2.4001 – 2.4012 & W-3.3609 – 3.3619)
23. What are the ways a person is admitted to active membership in the church? (W-4.2000)
24. Is marriage a sacrament? (W-4.9000)
25. Where should funerals be held? What about fraternal orders participating in the service? (W-4.10000)

Practice Questions

1. Suppose at a congregational meeting called for the purpose of hearing and acting on the report of the Pastor Nominating Committee. Rev. Jones (a retired) minister, who has been attending your church since retirement) gets the floor and places in nomination the name of another person other than the Pastor Nominating Committee nominates. What would happen?
2. Suppose that you are a member of the budget committee. On the basis of pledges, it appears that you can raise the pastor's salary for next year. Outline all of the steps that would have to be taken.
3. Suppose that your pastor is moderating a meeting of your congregation. There is a tie vote on an issue before the congregation. What happens?
4. Can the Session require all members of the congregation to tithe? If so, Why? If not, why not?
5. Can an officer in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) be elected by a plurality vote?
6. Does the Session grant the Pastor permission to take vacation/study leave?
7. What is the inalienable right of the members of the Presbyterian congregation?
8. Can a congregation or a Session fire the Pastor?
9. Who is responsible for seeing to it that the Pastor does his/her job?

Appendix F
Installation of a Commissioned Ruling Elder

Order of Worship

Gathering Music

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Hymn of Praise

Call to Confession

Congregational Response

Assurance of Forgiveness

Old Testament Reading

New Testament Reading

Sermon

Profession of Faith

Hymn

Constitutional Questions

Prayer of Beginning

Declaration of Installation

Charge to the CRE

Charge to the Congregation

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

Doxology

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Hymn

Remarks and Benediction (by the CRE)

Postlude

Liturgy for Commissioning Ruling Elders

Introduction of the Commissioned Ruling Elders Candidates

Sentences of Scripture

[The Moderator leads the people:]

We, who are many, are one body in Christ
And individually we are members of one another.
We have gifts that differ
according to the grace given to us:
prophecy, in proportion to faith;
ministry, in ministering;
the teacher, in teaching;
the exhorter, in exhortation;
the giver, in generosity;
the leader, in diligence;
the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Romans 12:5-8

Lead a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called,
making every effort to maintain
the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
There is one body and one Spirit,
just as we were called to one hope of our calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of us all,
who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:1-6

[The Moderator continues:]

Salem Presbytery is satisfied that [names of CRE graduates] have met all the requirements and completed all the preparations prescribed in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

We now commission them to preach and fill pulpits in Salem Presbytery, eligible to be considered for Commissioned Ruling Elders positions for Presbyterian churches within the bounds of Salem Presbytery.

Constitutional Questions

Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I do.

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the church universal, and God's Word to you?

I do.

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

I do, and I will.

Will you fulfill your commission in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and continually guided by our confessions?

I will.

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

I will.

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

I will.

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

I do.

Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

I will.

Will you be a faithful Commissioned Ruling Elders watching over the people, providing for their worship? In your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

I will, with God's help

Prayer

Almighty God:
in every age you have chosen servants
to speak your Word and lead your loyal people.
We thank you for these dedicated elders

whom you have called to serve you
as Commissioned Ruling Elders
in Salem Presbytery.
Give each of them special gifts to do his or her particular work.
Fill them with your Holy Spirit,
so each woman and man may have the same mind
that was in Christ Jesus,
and be a faithful disciple throughout life.

[All may pray together:]

God of grace,
in baptism you have called us
to a common ministry
as ambassadors of Christ,
trusting us with the message of reconciliation.
Give us courage and discipline
to follow where your servants rightly lead us,
that together we may declare your wonderful deeds
and show your love to the world;
through Jesus Christ the Lord of all.
Amen.

[The Moderator greets the lay pastors]

On behalf of the Presbytery of Salem
I welcome you to this ministry.
May God's Holy Spirit empower you
in the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen

APPENDIX G
 Certification to Perform Weddings
 Commissioned Ruling Elder of Salem Presbytery

Commissioned Ruling Elder: _____

Church: _____

Theological Issues Related To Marriage		
Date of completion	Instructor (print)	Instructor (signature)
Civil Aspects Of Marriage		
Date of completion	Instructor (print)	Instructor (signature)
The Mechanics And Logistics Of A Marriage Service		
Date of completion	Instructor (print)	Instructor (signature)
Pre-Marital Counseling		
Date of completion	Instructor (print)	Instructor (signature)

Approval by Salem Presbytery to perform weddings at the church they are serving

 Church

 Date

 Signature of Stated Clerk

 Print