

**The Candidacy and Ordination Process
in the Midwest Presbytery**
See Chapters 11 & 12 of the Book of Government
Updated February 2024

Phase Zero: Recommendation for Candidacy

- Step 0.1:** Be a member of a church in the Midwest Presbytery for at least six months.
- Step 0.2:** Obtain the endorsement of the church session.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to seek candidacy early in their seminary training, if not before. Ideally, the process of candidacy is not a technical hurdle to ordination, but a process of discernment and preparation for a call to gospel ministry.

Phase One: Coming Under Care

- Step 1.1:** Submit initial documents for coming under care to the Candidate Care Sub-committee at candidate.care@midwestpresbytery.org.
 - 1.1.1:** Application to Come Under Care: www.epc.org/files/applicationtocomeundercareofpresbytery
 - 1.1.2:** Preliminary Questionnaire: www.epc.org/files/preliminaryquestionnaire
 - 1.1.3:** Session Endorsement Form: www.epc.org/files/sessionendorsementform
- Step 1.2:** Schedule an interview with the Ministerial Committee.

In this interview, you will share the 10-minute version of your testimony, how you were called to ministry, and why the EPC is a good fit for you. The committee typically meets via Zoom in January, April, and August (Presbytery meets in February, May and September).

- Step 1.3:** (Before the interview with the committee) Fill out the first 8 pages (through the **Narrative Section**) of the **Personal Information Form**, also known as the **PIF**: www.epc.org/files/pif
- Step 1.4:** Be interviewed for candidacy by the presbytery.

After the interview with the committee is completed, the candidate will go to the floor of presbytery (typically at a meeting in February, May, or September) and share their testimony,

call to ministry and why the EPC is a good fit. Members of presbytery may ask follow-up questions. This is not a theological examination.

In all but the most uncommon circumstances, the prospective candidate will then be officially approved as a candidate under care of the presbytery.

The presbytery will choose an advisor to guide you through the rest of the process.

Phase Two: Preparation for Ordination While Under Care

- Step 2.1:** Wait a **minimum of 12 months** for ordination (Phase 3).

The EPC requires being under care for 12 months before ordination. There can be exceptions to this rule, but that is not the normal experience. These 12 months should be spent making progress on the following requirements, many of which can be done concurrently.

- Step 2.2:** Complete **educational requirements**.

If the candidate is pursuing an **MDiv**, it's important for the candidate to make sure they are taking the right classes to meet [the EPC's core course requirements](#). See BOG Chapters 11 & 12.

If the candidate is not a traditional MDiv student but an "extraordinary candidate" in the **Candidates Educational Equivalency Program**, it's important for the candidate to make sure they are on track for meeting the EPC's MDiv equivalency requirements. Connect with the Ministerial Committee Member responsible for candidates under care for more information.

- Step 2.3:** Have a **psychological evaluation** using the MMPI-3.

The Midwest Presbytery has an arrangement with a preferred counselor who does this online. The cost is \$600, half is paid for by the Presbytery and half is typically paid for by the candidate's Session—it is up to the candidate to make this arrangement with the Session. The candidate will need to agree to release the results to the Ministerial Committee member responsible for candidates under care.

When you are ready for this portion, email to the Ministerial Committee Member responsible for candidates under care for specific instructions. **DO NOT DELAY** this portion. It can take up to 3 weeks to set up the evaluation and another week to get the results.

- Step 2.4:** **Receive a call**.

Ordination is an act of the presbytery in response to a call by a calling body (see the *Book of Government* 9-5 for more information). The most common calls are as a pastor, associate

pastor, or assistant pastor, but a candidate may also be called as an evangelist or chaplain (or even a teacher or administrator, but these situations are uncommon). Candidates desiring a call as a chaplain must consult with the Chaplains Work and Care Committee of the General Assembly.

Candidates are encouraged to consult the EPC's Ministry Staff Opportunities page for a list of open positions. It is wise to begin looking for a call in the year leading up to completing educational requirements. Candidates should also make sure their PIF is up to date, including their availability to receive a call, as this may be distributed to search committees.

As the candidate is completing educational requirements and is in the process of securing a call, the following items will need to be completed.

- Step 2.5:** Take and pass the four **written exams** from the Office of the General Assembly.

A candidate must have satisfied their educational requirements and be being considered for a call in order to take the exams.

This whole process can take 4-5 weeks from ordering the exams to receiving the graded results. To avoid a time crunch, it is ideal to request exams at least 3 months before the presbytery meeting at which they will be examined.

It is highly recommended that you consider the following reading list and utilize the practice exams on the EPC website (under resources, under ministry resources, under ministerial vocation).

- **Written Exam Study Guides and Practice Exams:**
<https://epc.org/ministerialvocation/mvcresources/>
- **Reformed Reading List:** www.epc.org/files/reformedreadinglist

- Step 2.6:** Complete **other steps** before the Ministerial Committee examination and call by the congregation.

- 2.6.1:** Have a **physical examination** by a medical doctor.

This examination may take place at any point in the 12 months preceding the candidate's ordination exam. Please have the physician fill out the following form and return to the Ministerial Committee Member responsible for candidates under care:
www.epc.org/files/instructionsforexaminingphysician.

- 2.6.2:** The presbytery will perform a **background check** on the candidate and make reference checks by contacting the references on the PIF.

You will need to fill out a Release of Information form to be supplied by the chair of the Candidate Care Subcommittee.

- 2.6.3:** Have a copy of **college and seminary transcripts** sent to the chair of the Candidate Care Subcommittee.
- 2.6.4:** Complete the **Personal Information Form** and submit any **disagreements with the Westminster Confession of Faith**.
- 2.6.5:** Sign and submit the **ethical affirmations form:**
www.epc.org/files/ethicalaffirmationsforepcleaders
- 2.6.6:** Complete and submit the **Statement of Faith Form:**
www.epc.org/files/candidatesstatementoffaith
- Step 2.7:** Schedule and pass an **oral examination with the Ministerial Committee**. This step will ordinarily be the last before the congregation formally calls the candidate as a pastor.

The candidate will be examined in five areas: theology and sacraments, English Bible, the Book of Order (you should have read the Book of Order by now), the history of the church/reformed tradition, and the nature and office of the Teaching Elder. Remember, the committee meets in January, April, and August.

The committee will determine whether or not to consent to the local church's call and recommend the candidate to the presbytery for ordination.

- Step 2.8:** (If seeking ordination as a pastor,) Formally receive a call from a Midwest Presbytery congregation.

Phase Three: Ordination (1-2 Months)

- Step 3.1:** Complete **final steps** before the **oral examination on the floor of presbytery**.
 - 3.1.1:** Ensure submission of the candidate's **Terms of Call**.
 - **Terms of Call Form, Pastor/Associate Pastor:**
www.epc.org/files/termsofcall-pastorassociatepastor
 - **Terms of Call Form, Assistant Pastor:**
www.epc.org/files/termsofcall-assistantpastor

- 3.1.2:** Submit a proposed **Ordination Commission** to the chair of the Candidate Care Subcommittee.

The ordination commission must be composed of at least 5 elders from within the Midwest Presbytery and RE representation from at least 2 churches. Ordinarily, an administrative commission will be composed of 2 TEs and 4 REs.

- 3.1.3:** Sign and submit the **Ministerial Obligation Form:**
<https://epc.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/4-Resources/5-Downloadable-EPC-Resources/I-Forms-Ministerial-Search-Committees/MinisterialObligationTeachingElder.pdf>

- 3.1.4:** Prepare to **preach a sermon** to the presbytery.

This is part of the candidate's oral examination. Depending on the presbytery docket, it may be a 12-15 minute or 25-30 minute sermon.

- 3.1.5:** Pass an **oral examination by the presbytery.**

The candidate will answer questions under the same five areas as the exam before the Ministerial Committee, initially from a committee representative but then from members of Presbytery.

- Step 3.2:** Be **ordained and installed** at the church of the candidate's call.

- **Order of Service:** www.epc.org/files/ordinationandinstallationofteachingelder
- The Chair of the Commission will **submit minutes** of the Ordination to Presbytery.
www.epc.org/files/minutesofcommissiontoordaininstall