

Foothills Presbytery Commissioned Ruling Elder Policy & Procedures



*Caring, Empowering and Celebrating
the churches in Foothills Presbytery*

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Commissioned Ruling Elder

From the **Book of Order** G-2.10 Commissioning Ruling Elders

When the presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve in a validated ministry of the presbytery. Presbytery, in its commission, may 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. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.

Policy

To enter into the study to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder in Foothills Presbytery, one must be an active member of a Foothills congregation and an ordained Ruling Elder, who has completed at least one full, active 3-year term in the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Procedures

This document outlines the training and other procedures required to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) in Foothills Presbytery.

Steps to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder

1. Meet with the Minister of Word and Sacrament and the Session of your home congregation to ask for their support and approval to enter the track to become a CRE. It may be helpful to review Book of Order G-2.10 together. You will also want to have a discussion with them about possible financial support during this process, especially for the Ministry Development Services (MDS) Assessment.
2. Have the Clerk of Session complete the CRE Endorsement Form and submit it to the Presbytery Office or to the Chair of the CRE Supervisory Committee. See Appendix A: CRE Session Endorsement Form.
3. Complete the CRE Application Form for entry into the program and submit it to the Presbytery Office or to the Chair of the CRE Supervisory Committee. See Appendix B: CRE Application Form.

4. Complete the appropriate forms with the Presbytery Office for a background check to be performed. Contact LeAnne White to obtain the form at lwhite@foothillspresbytery.org. See Appendix C: Disclosure and Authorization
5. The applicant must meet with the Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) Supervisory Committee or its representatives to be approved pending acceptable results of the background checks and psychological testing.
6. Once approved by the CRE Supervisory Committee, you will begin your training. See the details in the Training section of this document.
7. We recommend that you complete at least 2, but not more than 4, of the courses prior to taking the psychological assessment.
8. Register for and take the psychological assessment through the agency currently approved by Foothills Presbytery. Please note this assessment will cost > \$1,000. You may want to request financial assistance from your home church. See Appendix D: Contact Information for Ministry Development Services.
9. The psychology assessment can take several weeks. The report will be reviewed by the CRE Supervisory Committee.
10. While you are in the program, the CRE Supervisory Committee will assign a covenant partner/mentor to you. You should have at least quarterly contact with your mentor for prayer and support. He/she will help you navigate the program.
11. Once a year you should have an Annual Consultation with the CRE Supervisory Committee to review your progress and to discuss any support that you need in the program. You may invite your mentor to join you.
12. When you have completed the 8 required courses, you will meet with the CRE Supervisory Committee. You will give a 5-minute homily. At this meeting, the CRE Supervisory Committee will determine your readiness for a commission. If they approve your readiness, it will be reported to COM. You also may be considered for Pulpit Supply list.
13. The COM will share your name with churches which have a need and may benefit from the services of a CRE.
14. A church seeking the services of a CRE will contact you to discuss the needs and to determine if you are a good fit for them.
15. You will meet with the church Session to develop a covenant agreement. See the Covenant Agreement section below and Appendix E: Sample CRE Covenant Agreement

16. Once you and the church agree on a covenant relationship, you will need to meet with the Examinations Commission of Foothills Presbytery. They will review your bio, your personal faith statement, and your training. You will give a 5-minute homily. This committee will determine if you are ready to be commissioned.
17. You will work with the Examinations Commission and COM to determine what your commission will include. A Commission Authorization Form will be completed. See Appendix F: CRE Commission Authorization Form.
18. Once approved by Examinations and COM, you will need to be presented to the Presbytery for approval. The Examinations Commission will introduce you to be examined from the floor.
19. Once approved by the Presbytery, COM will assign a mentor who is a minister of Word and Sacrament. This minister will provide mentoring and be available to answer questions about polity, theology, and church life.
20. After you begin your commission, COM will monitor the covenant relationship between you and the congregation.

Training

From the **Book of Order** G-2.1002 *Training, Examination and Commissioning*
A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery.

Foothills Presbytery requires Ruling Elders who are seeking a commission to complete 8 core courses. The courses are listed below. A CRE candidate may choose where he/she completes the courses provided the other requirements are met.

1. No more than 5 of the courses may be taken online. Any exception must be approved by the CRE Supervisory Committee.
2. Courses from certain institutions will need to be pre-approved by the CRE Supervisory Committee. Details below.
3. Some courses taken in seminary may be applicable. Details below.

Required Courses

Foothills Presbytery requires 8 Reformed core courses for training to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder. Foothills Presbytery has specified the following courses as required.

1. Old Testament
2. New Testament
3. Reformed Theology
4. Presbyterian Polity
5. Preaching
6. Leading Worship and Administering the Sacraments
7. Pastoral Care
8. Church History

Once commissioned, Foothills Presbytery strongly encourages CRE's to take at least one continuing education course per year.

Training Options

As mentioned in *Book of Order* G-2.1002, the presbytery has oversight of the selection and training of the elder who seeks to become a commissioned ruling elder. Foothills Presbytery has approved the following training options.

Option 1—South Carolina Lay School of Theology has been in existence for many years and is managed by the five SC presbyteries. The Lay School is held one weekend in March or April and one weekend in October or November of each year. You may take only one course on each weekend; each weekend averages ten hours with a follow up paper sent to the instructor for grading to complete the course. Instructors report grades to the Lay School registrar who in turn sends reports to Foothills Presbytery two times a year to update your credits.

The SC Lay School awards a certificate to persons who complete their "core" courses in the CRE Track. To earn credit in the CRE Track, you must have endorsement from your Session and the CRE Supervisory Committee. Please note that this endorsement is a separate endorsement for the SC Lay School.

There are 8 core courses to be taken at the SC Lay School to receive a certificate from the Lay School. Foothills Presbytery posts the SC Lay School schedule on our website each semester.

You are not required to take courses from the SC Lay School, although this program is recommended by Foothills Presbytery.

SC Lay School regularly offers courses on this schedule:

Fall Core Classes

New Testament Survey
Reformed Theology
Pastoral Care
Church History

Spring Core Classes

Old Testament Survey
Presbyterian Polity
Worship and Sacraments
Preaching

Option 2: Union Seminary Pathways Online Courses is an online program of nine courses offered over a two-year period to provide educational preparation toward leading a congregation as a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE). The cost per class is \$125 and each class carries 3 CEUs. Union also offers a self-directed New Testament course. Here's a link to their program information: <https://www.upsem.edu/leadership-institute/pathways-learning-leadership-2/>

Please have the Registrar at Union Seminary send Foothills Presbytery verification that you have completed the course and passed all requirements to receive credit.

Option 3: Dubuque Theological Seminary Online Courses which have been approved by Foothills Presbytery for credit toward commissioned ruling elder certification. When signing up for an online course, you must request that the seminary send notification to Foothills Presbytery to receive the appropriate credit. This is an additional fee. To apply for a course, follow this link: <https://moodle.dbq.edu/mod/page/view.php?id=301860>

Most Dubuque online courses run for 12-weeks and equate to a 1.5 to 2 credit hour college coursework. On average the online student reads 300-500 pages, writes 7-10 pages of assignments, and spends 3-4 hours per week of class participation and preparation time. (Courses do not carry seminary or university credit.) You can pay extra to earn CEUs for the online courses. Maximum suggested number of courses to take at the same time is two. Dubuque offers many courses online, both core courses and electives such as the list below.

Core Courses and approximate start Dates:

1. Introduction to Old Testament (January & June)
2. Introduction to New Testament (April & September)
3. Pastoral Care (March & August)
4. Presbyterian Polity (February & July)
5. Reformed Theology (April & September)
6. Introduction to Preaching (June & December)
7. Foundations of Christian Education (January & June)
8. Reformed Worship and Sacraments (March & August)

Please have the Registrar at Dubuque send Foothills Presbytery verification that you have completed the course and passed all requirements to receive credit.

Option 4: Other PC(USA) Seminaries – Course work through another PC(USA) seminary must be approved in advance. Each will be evaluated on a case by case basis. You will be required to submit course catalog information and/or course syllabus for the CRE Supervisory committee to review.

When signing up for an online course, you must request that the seminary send notification to Foothills Presbytery to receive the appropriate credit.

Option 5: Credit for seminary courses previously taken. If you have previously taken courses at an accredited theological institution, some of your classes may apply towards the CRE training requirements. You will need to submit an official transcript from the institution, course catalog information, and/or course syllabus for the CRE Supervisory Committee to evaluate.

During periodic checkpoints or your Annual Consultation with the CRE Supervisory Committee, you will need to provide a status of your training. Please use the form in Appendix G to track your course work.

Covenant Agreement for Commission (Annual Contract)

A written covenant or agreement between the Session, COM, and CRE shall be agreed upon by all parties prior to an elder being examined by the Examinations Commission and prior to a commission being approved by Foothills Presbytery. The covenant shall include the following:

- Annual contract beginning and ending dates of the commission. (G-2.1001)
- Functions which the CRE is authorized to fulfill (G-2.1001)
- Details of the relationship to the congregation, new church development or validated ministry, including the list of duties
- Specify oversight for the CRE
 - A CRE in a congregation shall have oversight by a Session.
 - A CRE serving in a new church development shall have oversight by a commission of the presbytery.
 - A CRE in a validated ministry of the presbytery shall have oversight by a presbytery committee or team sponsoring that validated ministry.
- Specify relationship with the COM
 - COM shall assign a Minister of Word and Sacrament as a mentor and supervisor.
 - CRE shall make periodic reports of the commission as requested by COM.
 - COM shall hold an annual review of covenant for commission.
- Details of compensation, if applicable.

See Appendix E: Sample CRE Covenant Agreement

Other CRE Responsibilities

Once you have been validated as a Commissioned Ruling Elder, you will have the following responsibilities:

- attend Presbytery meetings
- complete a yearly report on the life of the congregation you are serving for the Committee on Ministry (COM)
- serve on Presbytery committees for the greater work of the Presbytery
- participate in the life of a particular church
- maintain applicable professional certifications and/or commissions

Changes to Current Assignment

You have the responsibility to notify the COM of any change in the work of the ministry to which you have been commissioned. COM will determine if the work still meets the criteria set forth or if any adjustments need to be made to the commission.

Completion or Termination of Assignment

A member of COM will contact you to conduct an Exit Interview when your commission expires or when you transition out of this commission. This will help us know how to support you with future assignments and how to serve the church in the future. Additionally, CRE's will be reminded of the boundary ethics connected to the end of a commission.

CREs Transferring from another Presbytery

If a CRE from another Presbytery moves into the boundaries of Foothills and wishes to seek a Commission as a Ruling Elder, the following steps must be completed.

1. Contact Foothills Presbytery to arrange a meeting with the Commissioned Ruling Elder Supervisory Committee.
2. Provide CRE documents from the Presbytery previously served and/or trained.
3. Provide the CRE Supervisory Committee with contact information on the transferring Presbytery CRE governing/oversight committee.
4. All requirements for Foothills CRE must be completed and approved by Foothills Presbytery COM. Any exceptions must be approved on a case by case basis by the CRE Supervisory Committee.

Role of the CRE Mentor

Every Commissioned Ruling Elder will be assigned a mentor who is a Minister of the Word and Sacrament. Your role as a mentor is to check in occasionally with the CRE to determine if he/she needs any support. You will answer questions related to polity, theology, and church life. As a mentor, you provide the CRE with someone to turn to when he/she needs support.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: CRE Session Endorsement Form

Appendix B: CRE Application Form

Appendix C: Disclosure and Authorization

Appendix D: Contact Information for Ministry Development Services

Appendix E: Sample CRE Covenant Agreement

Appendix F: CRE Commission Authorization Form

Appendix G: CRE Course Checklist

Appendix A: Session CRE Endorsement Form

Session: The applicant is seeking to become a candidate for the Commissioned Ruling Elder program within Foothills Presbytery. See *Book of Order* G-2.10. As a Ruling Elder in your church, we are asking you to examine him/her and then endorse him/her while in the program to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder. The Ruling Elder will need spiritual support from you during this journey. He/she may also need financial support from your church for costs associated with classes, books, or psychological assessments.

Name of Applicant: _____

The above applicant is an active member of _____

_____ Presbyterian Church in _____.

On _____, the Session met with the applicant who is a Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and examined him/her about becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder candidate of Foothills Presbytery.

The Session voted to recommend this person, with the following comments on his/her sense of call and particular gifts for this work: _____

Session Endorsement

Our church fully endorses this candidate and agrees to support him/her spiritually and financially while in the program to become a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

Signatures:

Clerk of Session:

Print _____

Signature _____

Moderator of Session:

Print _____

Signature _____

Appendix B: Application for Commissioned Ruling Elder Program

Personal Information

Name: _____ Date _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: () Male () Female

Family Information

() Married () Single If married, name of spouse: _____

Names and ages of children living at home: _____

Church Membership

Name of Congregation: _____

City / State: _____

Date received into Membership: _____

Educational History

High School:

Name of School: _____ Location: _____

Years attended: from ____ to ____ Did you graduate? ()Yes ()No

If "No", do you now have a GED Diploma? () Yes () No

College/University:

Name of School: _____ Location: _____

Years attended: from ____ to ____ Did you graduate? ()Yes ()No

Degree _____ Major: _____

Post-Graduate School:

Name of School: _____ Location: _____

Years attended: from ____ to ____ Did you graduate? ()Yes ()No

Degree _____ Major: _____

Please attach a document that describes the following.

1. Work and Military History: please list employers, type of work, and dates. A copy of your resume can be attached.
2. Church History: list the names, denominations, addresses and dates of membership for any churches where you have been a member.
3. List your length of active membership/service in PC(USA) churches.
4. List any Church Committees that you served on and any other service through a church (mission trips, Soup Kitchens, etc.)
5. List any service to the larger church: Presbytery committees, Synod, or General Assembly level activities.
6. List dates you were ordained as a Deacon and/or Ruling Elder. List any other service as an officer: Trustee, Clerk of Session, Treasurer, Moderator of Committee(s), etc.
7. Are there any other experiences which you believe will assist you in being an effective CRE?
8. Please list at least 3 references who are not immediate family and who can comment on your spiritual gifts. List the name, phone numbers, email address, and how they know you.
9. Tell us why you think you are being called as a Commissioned Ruling Elders.

I hereby authorize the CRE Subcommittee to contact my references and have an open discussion about my suitability as a Commissioned Ruling Elder candidate.

Applicant's signature: _____

Applicant's Statement

I hereby apply to the Commissioned Ruling Elder program of Foothills Presbytery. I desire to be trained and mentored to prepare for ministry. In reliance upon the grace of God, I promise to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this special ministry. I also promise to submit myself to the care of the Presbytery in matters that pertain to preparation and commissioning.

Applicant's signature

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Note: You must meet with your Session to seek their endorsement. You or the Clerk of Session will need to submit the Session Endorsement Form.

Appendix C: Disclosure and Authorization

[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

DISCLOSURE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

Foothills Presbytery (“the Company”) may obtain information about you for employment purposes from a third party consumer reporting agency. Thus, you may be the subject of a “consumer report” and/or an “investigative consumer report” which may include information about your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and/or mode of living, and information which can involve personal interviews with sources such as your neighbors, friends, or associates. These reports may contain information regarding your credit history, criminal history, social security verification, motor vehicle records (“driving records”), verification of your education or employment history, or other background checks. You have the right, upon written request made within a reasonable time after receipt of this notice, to request disclosure of the nature and scope of any investigative consumer report. Please be advised that the nature and scope of the most common form of investigative consumer report obtained with regard to applicants for employment is an investigation into your education and/or employment history conducted by LexisNexis Screening Solutions Inc, P.O. Box 105108, Atlanta, GA 30348-5108, 1-800-845-6004. The scope of this notice and authorization is all-encompassing, however, allowing the Company to obtain from any outside organization all manner of consumer reports and investigative consumer reports now and throughout the course of your employment to the extent permitted by law. As a result, you should carefully consider whether to exercise your right to request disclosure of the nature and scope of any investigative consumer report.

New York and Maine applicants or employees only: You have the right to inspect and receive a copy of any investigative consumer report requested by the Company by contacting the consumer reporting agency identified above directly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

I acknowledge receipt of the DISCLOSURE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION and A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT and certify that I have read and understand both of those documents. I hereby authorize the obtaining of “consumer reports” and/or “investigative consumer reports” by the Company at any time after receipt of this authorization and throughout my employment, if applicable. To this end, I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, administrator, state or federal agency, institution, school or university (public or private), information service bureau, employer, or insurance company to furnish any and all background information requested by LexisNexis Screening Solutions Inc., P. O. Box 105108, Atlanta, GA 30348-5108, 1-800-845-6004, another outside organization acting on behalf of the Company, and/or the Company itself. I agree that a facsimile (“fax”), electronic or photographic copy of this Authorization shall be as valid as the original.

New York applicants or employees only: By signing below, you also acknowledge receipt of Article 23-A of the New York Correction Law.

Minnesota and Oklahoma applicants or employees only: Please check this box if you would like to receive a copy of a consumer report if one is obtained by the Company.

California applicants or employees only: By signing below, you also acknowledge receipt of the NOTICE REGARDING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION PURSUANT TO CALIFORNIA LAW. Please check this box if you would like to receive a copy of an investigative consumer report or consumer credit report at no charge if one is obtained by the Company whenever you have a right to receive such a copy under California law.

I release **Foothills Presbytery** and/or its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources used.

Last Name _____ **First** _____ **Middle** _____

(Please print)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

State of _____, County of _____, on (date) ____/____/____, before me, (Notary) _____, personally appeared, (Signer) _____,

personally known to me –OR– proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she executed the same in his/her authorized capacity, and that by his/her signature on the instrument the person executed the instrument ~ **WITNESS my hand and official seal**

Notary Signature _____ **My commission expires on (date)** ____/____/____

Foothills Presbytery
DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION ~ Commissioned Ruling Elder
[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

The following is my true and complete legal name and all information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

Last Name _____ **First** _____ **Middle** _____

(Please print)

Other Names/Alias _____ **Maiden** _____

Social Security* # _____ - _____ - _____ Date of Birth* _____ / _____ / _____
of Month /
Date / Year

Driver’s License # _____ State of Driver’s License** _____

Home Street Address _____ Phone Number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Cell Phone _____ Work Phone _____

School Street Address _____ Phone Number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Other Places of Residence—please provide information reflecting the past 10 years not listed above.

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Street Address _____ Dates from _____ to _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Use additional pages if needed.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**Foothills Presbytery
DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION**

[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

Education High School _____

City and State _____

Year of Graduation _____

College or University _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

College or University _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

Graduate School _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

Seminary _____ Years of Attendance _____

Address, City and State _____

Major _____

Degree Awarded Yes No Type(s) _____ Graduation Year _____

Last Name _____ **First** _____ **Middle** _____

(Please print)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**Foothills Presbytery
DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION**

[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

Present Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Former Employer _____ City, State _____

Position _____

Dates of Employment _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Last Name _____ **First** _____ **Middle** _____
(Please print)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

**Foothills Presbytery
DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION**

[IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING AUTHORIZATION]

FAMILY DATA

Spouse

Maiden/

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Date of Birth* ____/____/____ Marriage Date ____/____/____ Divorce Date ____/____/____

Children by this Marriage

Child’s Full Name _____ Date of Birth* _____ Living at
of Month / Date / Year Home with You?

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

Others Living at Home with You?

(Relationship)

Previous Spouse

Maiden/Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Date of Birth* ____/____/____ Marriage Date ____/____/____ Divorce Date ____/____/____

Children by this Marriage

Child’s Full Name _____ # of Month / Date / Year Home with You?

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

_____ ____/____/____ Yes No

*This information will be used for background screening purposes only and will not be used as hiring criteria

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

(Please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Contact Information for Ministry Development Services

Introduction

Applicants for Inquiry in the preparation for ministry process are referred to the Ministry Development Services agency for career and psychological assessment prior to meeting with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. This process can take 6 – 8 weeks so please plan accordingly.

Ministry Development Services (MDS) guides and nurtures ministerial candidates, church professionals, and individuals from a number of denominations through the process of career and life planning. They provide vocational counseling and assessment, programs in congregational leadership, conflict resolution, boundaries, and self-care.

Costs

The cost for the testing and assessment range is greater than \$1,000 for CRE candidates. A deposit is required to start the online assessment/inventories. The remaining balance will be due prior to your appointment. As an applicant, you are responsible for the fee or for seeking support from your home church for a portion of this fee. Payment is made directly to MDS.

Contact Information

The address for Ministry Development Services is 6100 Sardis Road, Charlotte, NC, 28270. Their phone number is 704.554.9222. Their website is www.ministryds.org.

Process

Below we outline the various steps that you will need to take to complete the assessment. The detailed process is listed, as well as a high level, simple view.

- Step One:** Make an Appointment. Schedule an appointment by calling MDS at 704-554-9222. When you call to make the appointment, MDS will confirm the fee.
- Step Two:** Register. Download the appropriate registration form from their website. Complete and sign the registration form. Return it **at least 14 days** prior to your appointment along with any required deposit.
- Step Three:** Complete Forms. Download, complete, and return all forms required for your category. Each form is available in Word document and PDF formats. You may type directly onto downloaded Word forms. All materials must be returned to MDS to be received **at least 14 days** prior to your appointment.
- Step Four:** Complete assessments/inventories. After MDS has received your registration form and deposit, they will email you about the inventories you must complete. You will complete the inventories at a designated computer testing site. You will be given a password code that you must use to access the

inventories at the testing site. The pass code is good only for one testing administration. Results will be shared with you at your appointment. Testing must be completed **at least 14 days** prior to your appointment. Failure to complete the testing in time may result in cancellation of your appointment.

- Step Five:** Arrive on Time. Please arrive for your appointment at least 15 minutes early. You may have additional paperwork or inventories to complete before you meet with a counselor.

Outline of Ministry Development Services Process

Call MDS at 704.554.9222 to schedule an appointment

Complete registration form online at ministryds.org.
(This includes paying the deposit.)

Download & complete forms. Must be submitted to MDS at least 14 days prior to appointment.

Complete assessments/inventories. Must be completed at least 14 days prior to appointment.

Appointment: Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. You may need to complete additional inventories.

Appendix E: Sample CRE Covenant Agreement

This agreement is between the Session of _____ Church and _____, the Commissioned Ruling Elder, and Foothills Presbytery. The term of this agreement shall be from (beginning date) to (ending date).

I. Duties: This agreement is for service as a Commissioned Ruling Elder to fulfill the duties outlined below.

(Please list all duties of the position as prepared by the Session and approved by the Committee on Ministry. (Some examples are: (1) *Teaching word and scripture*; (2) *Leading worship, officiate and preach as scheduled*; (3) *Administer the sacraments*; (4) *Officiate at weddings and funerals*; (5) *With the Clerk of Session, plan and moderate Session and congregational meetings*; (6) *Work with committees and groups to accomplish their stated goals*; (7) *Conduct special activities, such as training, Bible study, lay leader development, session and officer training, as needed*; (8) *Pastoral care.*)

Duties:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

II. Compensation and Benefits: On behalf of the Church, the Session promises to compensate the CRE in the following manner:

Hours Work per Week: _____

Effective Salary

Annual Cash Base	Amount:
Housing Allowance/Fair Market Value of Manse	Amount:
Social Security Reimbursement	Amount:

Benefits

Full pension, including medical benefits plan, at the then effective rate	Amount:
Social Security	Amount:

Professional Expense Reimbursement

Professional Expense Reimbursement (Books, mileage at IRS rate, etc.)	Amount:
Continuing Education Reimbursement	Amount:
All reasonable moving costs (if needed) from \$ _____ to	

\$ _____, not to exceed \$ _____.

Vacation: 4 weeks annual leave (including 4 Sundays, prorated for any partial year)

Study Leave: 2 weeks annual leave for continuing education and study (including 2 Sundays, prorated for any partial year)

III. Term of Covenant Renewal: This covenant agreement is made for a period of up to one year and may be renewed by the written consent of all parties and subject to the approval of the Committee on Ministry of Foothills Presbytery. Any changes, updates and/or provisions will be presented to and approved by the Committee on Ministry.

IV. Termination

- A. By the Commissioned Ruling Elder:
 - 1. If this agreement is terminated by the CRE, it may be terminated with (60) days written notice and the fulfillment of all compensation shall be effective on that date of termination.
 - 2. The Committee on Ministry shall be notified immediately in the event of termination.
- B. By the Session:
 - 1. The session may terminate this contract with a (60) day written notice. Such termination shall be made in consultation with the Committee on Ministry of Foothills Presbytery.
 - 2. The Committee of Ministry shall be notified immediately in the event of termination.
- C. Compensation: The Session agrees that all compensation due for the services of the CRE shall be paid by the date the termination becomes effective.

Signatures

By our signatures affixed hereto, we acknowledge acceptance and agreement of this covenant.

For: _____ Church Date: _____

Signature: _____, Clerk of Session

Signature: _____, Moderator of Session

This is to certify that I have received and accepted the terms of this agreement to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

Signature: _____, CRE

Approved by Foothills Presbytery Committee on Ministry:

Signature: _____, Chair of COM Date: _____

Signature: _____, Stated Clerk Date: _____

**Appendix F: CRE Commission Authorization Form
 Foothills Presbytery
 Commissioned Ruling Elder
 Commission Authorization**

_____ is hereby commissioned

 (Name)

to _____ to serve as a

 (Church/Organization)

_____ (Moderator, CRE, other)

as of _____ until _____ (up to 3 years).

COM Assigns the following Teaching Elder/Mentor/Supervisor _____

Authorized by COM to perform the following functions as defined in **Book of Order G-2.1001**:

- _____ a. Administer the Sacraments
- _____ b. Moderate the Session
- _____ c. Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited/approved by Session

During your commission to this service, you have the privilege of voice and vote in Presbytery Meetings and in the case of those moderating a Session, a voice and vote at all meetings. (Reference Foothills Presbytery Manual of Operations Section III, E. 4.)

Approval of Commission for Commissioned Ruling Elder

_____ date _____
 Commissioned Ruling Elder

_____ date _____
 Committee on Ministry/CRE Sub Committee

_____ date _____
 Presbytery Stated Clerk/Associate Stated Clerk

Note: A new form is required to extend years of service or changes commission.

Appendix G: CRE Course Checklist

To enter into the study to be a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) for particular pastoral service in Foothills Presbytery, one must be an active member of a Foothills congregation and an ordained ruling elder in the PC(USA). The applicant must meet with the CRE Supervisory Committee, who will make a recommendation to the Committee on Ministry (COM) for approval to study in the CRE program and in the SC5 Lay School of Theology in SC.

Name _____ Home Ph _____

Address _____ Bus Ph _____

City, Zip _____ Cell _____

Email _____ Church _____

Date Approved by COM for CRE Track _____

Date Background Report Received _____

Date Psychological Testing Report Received _____

The following courses are required by Foothills Presbytery to become a CRE.

Course	Date	Place	Instructor(s)	Grade	Credit
<i>Old Testament</i>					
<i>New Testament</i>					
<i>Reformed Theology</i>					
<i>Presbyterian Polity</i>					
<i>Preaching</i>					
<i>Leading Worship & Administering the Sacraments</i>					
<i>Pastoral Care</i>					
<i>Church History</i>					