



Trained Ruling Elder Program

Overview and Application

Flint River Presbytery's Committee on Ministry

TRE = Trained Ruling Elder
CRE = Commissioned Ruling Elder
COM = Committee on Ministry

Context and Purpose of TRE Program

The 21st century presents the congregations of Flint River Presbytery with many challenges and many opportunities, not the least of which is securing pastoral leadership for community ministry, congregational life, and worship. Following the directives and guidelines contained in the Book of Order, section G-2.10:

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.

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.

The ruling elder commissioned under the terms of G-2.1001 shall work under the supervision of the presbytery. The presbytery may at any time withdraw the commission for reasons it deems good and sufficient. A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

Flint River Presbytery maintains a program for the training, development, and certification of Ruling Elders who can provide leadership for our congregations and presbytery. **An elder who has successfully completed the training may be counted as a Trained Ruling Elder. Of those trained, the presbytery may commission an elder to a certain leadership role, thus making the elder a Commissioned Ruling Elder. All CREs are TREs, but not all TREs become CREs.**

Ever adapting to the needs of our presbytery, the goals of our program include:

1. providing pastoral leadership, preaching, and administration of the sacraments for congregations without a Minister of Word and Sacrament
1. providing a ready source of supply preachers for congregations
2. providing temporary or regular moderators for sessions lacking a moderator
3. providing congregations trained leaders who can facilitate communal care/pastoral care
4. providing congregations trained leaders who can facilitate community ministry and outreach
5. providing leaders for other forms of ministry as context and mission dictate

TRE Proposed Training Schedule

The TRE training program is currently a 12 session program, with classes ordinarily held monthly, on a Saturday, using a mixture of in-person and online gatherings. Classes will be taught by Teaching and Ruling Elders from our presbytery, recruited by the Dean and approved by the Committee on Ministry. Reading and preparation assignments will be given for each monthly class topic.

Training is open to any ruling elder who is a member of a congregation in Flint River Presbytery. Required with an application are 1. an endorsement from the elder's current pastor (or Clerk of Session if there is not a pastor), 2. an endorsement from the session of the congregation where the elder is a member, and 3. a background check.

The cost for the program \$300, or \$25 per session. A ruling elder's congregation may choose to underwrite all or some of this tuition. *Tuition can be waived if there is a financial hardship.*

The training curriculum will include studies in Bible, Reformed Theology, worship and sacraments, Presbyterian polity, preaching, worship leadership, pastoral care, ministry leadership, and other topics as dictated by the needs of the presbytery and its mission.

In addition to classroom instruction, ruling elders in the training program may put into practice what they are learning through an internship in a ministry setting, supervised by a teaching elder. This internship will be individually tailored to the needs of each student as determined by the Dean of the program and the Committee on Ministry.

Class 1	Introduction to Christian Ministry
Class 2	Leading in Ministry: Preaching
Class 3	Leading in Ministry: Personal, Pastoral, and Public Praying
Class 4	Foundations of Ministry: Old Testament
Class 5	Foundations of Ministry: New Testament
Class 6	Foundations of Ministry: Reformed Theology
Class 7	Resources for Ministry: Book of Confessions
Class 8	Resources for Ministry: Book of Order
Class 9	Leading in Ministry: Moderating Meetings
Class 10	Leading in Ministry: Pastoral and Congregational Caring
Class 11	Leading in Ministry: Mission beyond Church Walls
Class 12	Roadmap for Discernment ; Overview of Commissioning

TRE Training Application

Training Entrance Requirements Checklist:

- Ordained Ruling Elder in a PCUSA congregation
- Member of a congregation in Flint River Presbytery
- Associate degree (or higher) and/or equivalent work experience
- Commitment to attend classes one day per month for 12 months
- Commitment to study at least 10 hours for each monthly session
- Pastor and/or Clerk of Session endorsement
- This application completed and returned to Flint River Presbytery

Return all completed forms and scan/email to ecantrell@flintriverpresbytery.org

Trained Ruling Elder Application

Name _____ Date _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Church of Membership _____ (City) _____

Year you joined this Church: _____

Total length of membership in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA): _____

Year Ordained as Ruling Elder: _____

In what church/where? _____

On a separate paper, please respond to the following questions:

- Why are you interested in becoming a Trained Ruling Elder?
- What gifts and talents do you have which will help you be effective serving a church?
- What does it mean to you to be a Presbyterian?
- Write a brief (300-600 word) summary of your Christian faith story.
- Describe your spiritual practices, including prayer, Bible reading, worship, service, etc.
- List your educational background, including schools and degrees.
- Briefly outline your work history, including present employment.

Statement of Commitment: I hereby apply for admission to the TRE Training Program of Flint River Presbytery. If accepted, I commit myself to participate fully in the scheduled activities and assignments. I understand I will be undertaking a commitment of academic, practical, and spiritual nature. I also understand that successful completion of this training program is necessary before I can be considered for Commissioned Ruling Elder. I am also willing to commit myself to continuing education after completing the program to maintain commissioning.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Trained Ruling Elder SESSION Endorsement

The Session of _____ Presbyterian Church has endorsed

_____ (elder) for the Trained Ruling Elder Program
of Flint River Presbytery.

Comments:

Clerk of Session: _____ Date: _____

Return this completed form via email to ecantrell@flintriverpresbytery.org

Trained Ruling Elder PASTOR Endorsement

To be completed by the applicant's pastor (or clerk of session if church is without a pastor)

_____ (name of elder)

Please comment pertaining to the areas listed below. Attach pages as needed. Your responses will be confidential and will be used only by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry in considering this person for enrollment in training to be a Trained Ruling Elder.

Christian commitment and maturity:

Leadership abilities:

Openness to new ideas and learning:

Assessment of this person's suitability to serve in this role:

Other comments you want the Committee on Ministry to know:

Signature _____ Date: _____

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