

Pursuing Ordination in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

Based on the PCA Book of Church Order (chapters 18-21)

Steps to ordination:

- 1. Calling and submission:** A candidate for the ministry must be a church member in good standing who believes himself to be called to preach the Gospel and is willing to submit himself to the care and direction of the Presbytery while he pursues a course of study and preparation for the office.
- 2. Coming under care:** An applicant for the ministry must place himself under the care of the local Presbytery with the recommendation of the session of the church of which he is a member. A candidate to come under care will be examined by the Presbytery regarding his experiential religion and motives for seeking the ministry. While under care, the candidate's ministry preparations will be under the oversight of the Presbytery and will include leading public worship, preaching, and other forms of Christian work.
- 3. Licensure:** While under care, a man desiring to preach on a regular basis within the PCA must be examined for licensure. The exam consists of a statement regarding Christian experience and calling and a written or oral exam on the Westminster standards, practical knowledge of the Bible, and a basic knowledge of the PCA's Book of Church Order, as well as the submission and presentation of a written sermon on an assigned passage of Scripture.
- 4. Internship:** All candidates for ministry must serve an internship of at least one year, which may occur during or after the candidate's theological education. During the internship, the candidate will have the opportunity to test his gifts and calling within the full range of ministerial activities.
- 5. Ordination:** A candidate or licentiate can be ordained only after receiving a call to a specific work, normally within the PCA. He must have completed formal theological training and be able to present evidence of the satisfactory completion of his internship. He must then be examined on his experiential religion, personal character, and family management, knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, Bible content, theology, the Sacraments, church history, the history of the PCA, and the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church. He must also prepare a thesis on an assigned theological topic and prepare and preach an exegetical sermon requiring knowledge of the original languages. Having completed these requirements, he must be formally ordained and installed into the office to which he has been called.

Special Note for Prospective Church Planters: Those desiring to plant churches in the PCA are normally expected to go through a formal church planting assessment process before ordination, conducted by a competent third-party approved by the Presbytery (the PCA has a church planter [assessment center](#)). Additional steps in the process of church planting in our presbytery are described [here](#).

For more information, see the PCA's [Book of Church Order](#).

[NOTE TO DAN:

Web links:

assessment center - www.pca-mna.org/churchplanting/assessmentcenter.php

Steps: link to step 2.0 document

Book of Church Order - www.pcaac.org/BCO 2008/BCO 2008 Reprint for Web 7-3-08.pdf]