



Community of Christ

GREATER PACIFIC NORTHWEST USA MISSION CENTER

How to Process a Priesthood Call in the GPNW Mission Center

Spiritually discerning a priesthood call for an individual is challenging, and that's just the beginning. Next, you complete the administrative and mentoring steps to call someone into priesthood. Mission Center staff members are here to help and guide you throughout this important journey in leadership.

- After you/your pastorate team have fully discerned a call for someone in your congregation to a specific priesthood office, fill out the attached form entitled "Recommendation for Ordination." Send your completed form (with detailed answers for all three pages) to Kim Naten, knaten@cofchrist-gpnw.org. Do not mail a printed copy. The Mission Center President will review the recommendation. **Please note:** If you are part of a co-pastor team, each one of you must support the call. Show this agreement by copying all your co-pastors when you send in the recommendation. If you do not, your call may be delayed. Exceptions to this requirement may be when a spouse or child of a pastor team member is being called. In those instances, please do not include the family member in the correspondence regarding the priesthood call until after it has been presented to the candidate.
- When the Mission Center President concurs with your recommendation, the Mission Center will send the name of the candidate to the Office of the First Presidency at World Church Headquarters for clearance to proceed. The First Presidency will report to the Mission Center whether or not the candidate has a consistent record of giving to one or more World Church Mission Initiatives, as well as local congregational or Mission Center giving, and whether the candidate is a registered youth worker, which is a requirement of priesthood. Please encourage all disciples to share equally: support mission we can see, across the church and world.
- Once World Church clearance is given, the Mission Center will send you a letter informing you that you may now present the priesthood call to the candidate. Prior to receiving this notification, the recommendation is considered confidential and should not be shared by you with others, including the candidate. The letter contains specific instructions regarding the steps to follow in presenting the call, as well as steps to take following presentation of the call. This includes scheduling a congregational business meeting (with two weeks' notice to the congregation) to approve the call, as well as outlining the required Temple School courses the candidate must complete prior to ordination.
- Completing required Temple School courses is the responsibility of the priesthood candidate. Mission Center staff can help coordinate classes in general geographic areas, identify instructors for those classes, and publicize scheduled classes for those in nearby congregations who may wish to participate.
- A local mentor for your candidate should be identified. The mentor should serve as an experienced, accessible guide and spiritual companion prior to ordination and for one to two years after. Mentoring is an indispensable investment in priesthood competence, courage, and confidence.
- Please keep the Mission Center's Membership Services Administrator apprised of the candidate's progress in their preparation for ordination and ordination details for recording.
- Priesthood calls are a vital and necessary part of our church's history, tradition, and future. While it is important to embrace and nurture the spiritual aspects of a call to the priesthood, it is equally important to follow the administrative requirements of processing each call. We look forward to experiencing the blessings that will follow as the candidate moves forward in the process. Thank you for your vital contribution to help individuals discover their own callings and journeys with God, for the benefit of all of God's creation.



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Recommendation for Ordination Form For Use with Aaronic Ministry and Calls to Office of Elder Only

DIRECTIONS: Print this document and read "Consideration for the Calling Officer" (last page), then complete this form. Contact Mission Center President Kim Naten (knaten@cofchrist-gpnw.org) for questions. Note: This call should be discussed only with proper administrative officers or others who will not share confidential information. *DO NOT APPROACH THE CANDIDATE ABOUT THE CALL UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED CLEARANCE TO DO SO.*

TO SUBMIT: Submit this document electronically by emailing a scanned version to Kim Naten at the email address above. If you are part of a Pastor Leadership Team, please include members of that team in your email, unless they are, or are related to, the priesthood candidate. Alternatively, if unable to send electronically, you may mail the form to Kim at 9517 Hawkins Ave., Granite Falls, WA 98252.

I recommend (candidate's name):		Membership Number:
For ordination to the office of:		
Candidate's residence (address):		
Currently enrolled in (congregation):		
Date of birth:	Sex:	Vocation:
Approximate number of years as: Church Member:		Priesthood:
Any previous priesthood offices held:		
Current marital status, approximate number of years: Married _____ Single _____		
Check if candidate has to your knowledge ever been: <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced		
Spouse is member of: <input type="checkbox"/> Community of Christ <input type="checkbox"/> Other church or faith <input type="checkbox"/> None		
Spouse will be comfortable with this call: <input type="checkbox"/> Highly <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly <input type="checkbox"/> Little		
Education (show graduation or degree, or number of years attended): Elementary _____ High School _____ Four-Year College _____ Postgraduate Work _____ Other Training _____		
Further training needed for this office: <input type="checkbox"/> Extensive <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Little		
As pastor (or other appropriate administrative officer), I present this recommendation as my own serious conviction of this call. Signature: _____ Official Capacity: _____ Congregation: _____ Date: _____		
Conviction concerning the candidate's call came to me as pastor/administrator in this manner (general conviction any 'special' feelings or experiences):		
Approved by:		
Mission Center President: _____		Date: _____
Apostle in Charge (if required): _____		Date: _____

Priesthood Standards and Qualifications

(To be completed by officer initiating the call.)

The following qualities and factors should be considered when reviewing the history and call of the candidate. Please explain all answers thoroughly.

1. Do you have a conviction that this person is being called to priesthood function in Community of Christ?
2. What are the gifts and potential for ministry evident in this person's life for immediate and long-term ministry? How do they relate to a calling of a specific office?
3. Is there need in the congregation or in other church settings for this person's ministry?
4. How will this ordination affect the balance of ministry according to priesthood offices in the congregation?
5. Is this person affirmative in testimony, regular in attendance, and positive in support of all levels of church life: congregation, Mission Center, and World Church?
6. Is this person's life currently "in order" in regard to personal relationships, morality, response to the principles of personal stewardship, finances?
7. If the person has been divorced, has inquiry been made regarding the circumstances?
8. Does this candidate exhibit good stewardship of health and hold high standards of behavior, e.g. avoiding the abuse of chemical substances, alcohol and tobacco?
9. Is the candidate a regular contributor to both local and world mission tithes? (A regular contributor is someone who shows a consistent pattern of giving to local and world mission tithes on a weekly or monthly basis for at least one year or on an annual basis for at least two years.)

10. Does the candidate evidence a positive attitude towards study, personal improvement, and spiritual growth?
11. If this person has been involved in any conduct which could reflect negatively on her or his ability to minister, have you counseled with your supervising officers to determine if this should be a factor in processing this recommendation?
12. Is the candidate's appearance and manner of dress acceptable to the congregation?
13. Does the candidate enjoy adequate health to fulfill the demands of the office?
14. What is the reaction of your counselors to this call?
15. What will be the likely reaction of the people assembled in legislative session or conference to this call?
16. What will be the likely reaction of the spouse and other members of the candidate's family to this call?
17. Please share how the ministry of this person can be related to the congregation's ministry to its members in terms of: "Each One, Reach One" and "Disciples' Generous Response."
18. Please list persons who could serve as potential mentors to this person.
19. Is there anything that might be a problem in acceptance or ministry of the candidate?

Consideration for the Calling Officer

1. This form is to be completed by the administrative officer initiating the call of a person to priesthood. On completion, it should be forwarded to the Mission Center President for further consideration and approvals. **Do not approach the candidate about the call until administrative approvals have been obtained and you have been notified to discuss the call with the candidate.**
2. An indication of divine call is required. It should also be understood that your experience as initiating officer need not be dramatic or completely without question.
3. Use your best judgment—not only concerning the spiritual experience regarding the call, but on every aspect that might affect ordination. That is, you are to take a holistic approach to the leadings of the Holy Spirit. You will not be asked to defend your discernment of the call, simply to share it. Sometimes a valid experience of calling a person does not reflect whether the timing is good now or if a later time would be wise. This should be a matter of prayer as well.
4. Confirmation of the call from a second person in the congregation sensing the divine intent is appropriate but not mandatory.
5. If you sense the call but are unclear as to the office, contact your supervising administrator for further counsel.
6. As the initiating officer regarding this call, you are part of a team that will determine the appropriateness of ordination. You should see yourself as a member of that team, rather than strictly the proponent of this particular call. We rely on the Holy Spirit working through the administrative officers of the church, not only to discern the divinity of the call but also to identify the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, the needs for ministry, etc. The strength of this approach is in gaining a number of perspectives. It is possible that other administrative officers will evaluate the situation differently, in which case this form will be returned to you for further consultation. Initiating the recommendation for ordination fulfills your integrity in response to the light you have received.
7. There are a number of considerations for ordination: acceptance of his/her ministry by the people, personal standards, the need for the candidate's ministry in a priesthood capacity, and ultimately the readiness of the candidate.
8. The candidate should meet personal standards before ordination, as well as to retain a priesthood license. These include stewardship compliance, continued training, and standards of personal conduct. (See the statement of Priesthood Standards and Qualifications.)
9. God calls priesthood through the church to serve Jesus Christ as servant leaders and ministers. Priesthood is an expression of faithful discipleship through ordained ministry roles. Faithful discipleship includes understanding and living the principles of Disciples' Generous Response. These principles include sharing generously according to one's true capacity to local and world mission tithes. Teaching and modeling the principles of Disciples' Generous Response is a responsibility of all priesthood members. Priesthood cannot teach these principles with integrity if they are not living the principles themselves. Potential priesthood members should show commitment to the whole mission of the church and the Enduring Principle of Grace and Generosity that makes mission possible. Regularly contributing to local and world mission tithes is a reasonable and proper standard for those recommended for ordination.
10. If you have felt moved to process a call but you know the candidate does not meet some of the priesthood standards, first give ministry to the person in the area of inadequacy, obtaining some response without revealing a specific call. If your conviction of the call persists, you should process the call with a notation explaining the deficiency, ministry given, and the candidate's response. **The administrative officers should not share a specific call with the candidate at any time prior to the usual approvals.** After all other considerations have indicated the appropriateness of ordination, the candidate may be approached about the call and encouraged to meet the standards. If the candidate subsequently meets all the standards, ordination can proceed.
11. After the church approves candidacy and you are notified to proceed, you, as the initiating officer, may approach the candidate. The candidate should be informed of your role in the process and that other approvals have been obtained. You should review the Priesthood Standards and Qualifications with the candidate and administer the Priesthood Interview. (It may be at this time that you become aware of personal standards that are not being met.)
12. The candidate should give prayerful consideration before accepting the call, realizing the commitment to training and service required. While the candidate may want personal validation of the call, this is not strictly necessary. You might encourage the candidate to weigh all considerations—needs of the church for ministry that he/she can give; time demands for preparation; skills, talents, and gifts that the candidate possesses; and his/her sense of being called.

13. If the candidate has questions regarding the office, the standards, or the timing of ordination, you should feel free to contact the next level administrator to help answer such questions. You can also expect help from Mission Center administrators to establish the Plan for Ministry.