

# Training for Ruling Elders in Particular Pastoral Service



Offered by the Presbyteries of

**Kiskiminetas**  
71 W. Main Street  
Yatesboro, PA 16263  
724-783-7196  
kiski@kiskipby.org

**Redstone**  
1004 Mt. Pleasant Road  
Greensburg, PA 15601  
724-837-6737  
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**Upper Ohio Valley**  
907 National Road  
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304-232-3490  
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**Washington**  
PO Box 146  
Eighty Four, PA 15330  
724-222-1500  
office@washingtonpresbytery.org



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working together as the  
Inter-Presbytery Leadership Formation  
Team (IPLF).

**Ruling Elders in Particular Pastoral Service**

*(as lay preachers/pastors or Commissioned Pastors)*

The Presbytery is responsible for providing worship, preaching, the celebration of the sacraments, pastoral care and leadership for its churches. To provide proper training for authorized persons to preach and lead worship and offer other pastoral functions for churches, the Presbyteries of Redstone, Washington, and Upper Ohio Valley have developed a brand new program. We were joined by Kiskiminetas Presbytery in our second year.

The purpose of this program is to train lay people in preaching and church leadership. Smaller churches in the presbyteries are looking for part-time lay pastors (CPs) to lead them. Some prefer having several preachers fill their pulpit on a rotating basis. They rely on lay preachers to do that. Churches of all sizes have a need to fill the pulpit for a week here and there. Again, this is a chance for a lay preacher to minister to a congregation. Larger churches may feel a need for someone to take on a particular ministry such as visiting the shut-ins. There is a need for people to pastor to the elderly in various care settings. There are increasing opportunities for Commissioned Pastors (CPs) or lay pastors to have a place in ministry.

Do you feel that God is calling you to a type of ministry serving churches week by week or as a commission? Do you feel this could be a vocation where you belong?

For more information, contact your presbytery.

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I was always the shy kid, who had trouble even looking a person in the eyes. I still felt this way as an adult; so when I felt God calling me into ministry, I tried to ignore it. With encouragement from my home church and Pastor, I said, "yes" to the classes being offered for Lay Pastors. The classes were tough, challenging, and a lot of work, but also very rewarding! We were taught how to prepare and deliver sermons. We spent many hours reading, writing, & discussing with classmates, but in the end, it was all worth it!

Today, 16 years later, after serving two churches, for 14 years, I constantly give thanks to God for allowing this all to take place the way it did! I am also thankful for all those who taught and encourage. If you feel God is calling you to this ministry, before you say, "I Can't!" pray and tell God, "I will try, with your help!" I know it worked for me, and if it's God's Will, it will work for you too! I now have the greatest job in the world and you can too!

*(Jim Sunseri, Commissioned Pastor Bethel Presbyterian Church and Bolivar PC – Redstone)*

I have been serving as a CP for the past 16 years. I have opportunities to lead worship and am called to meet people in their life's situations.

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12 that as a member of the Body of Christ, who has already been called to leadership, part of our responsibility is to use our gifts to build up the church. The CP program is an opportunity to open new paths to do that. It is one of the most spiritually rewarding journeys you will ever take. As you read the books, participate in class discussions, write papers, and participate in practical application of what you are reading, God can use this opportunity to challenge and deepen your personal faith.

One of the best words of advice I ever received was "Pray and if you continue to feel God nudging you, go for it, step out in faith." You may not know what gifts you bring to Christ's service. We don't always have all of the answers and all of the plans. God doesn't demand perfection, but God does demand a willing and contrite heart. God will use your strengths and even your weaknesses in God's service.

The CP education has deepened my faith and called me to a new commitment to Christ's service. I am now under care and am a candidate preparing for ordination. I am obtaining my M.Div through the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary's distance degree program.

*(Richard Watson, Commissioned Pastor of Leisenring Presbyterian Church – Redstone)*

Comments from Current CPs

I will soon celebrate 26 years as a commissioned lay pastor in Washington Presbytery, what an incredible journey it has been. To be given the opportunity to serve the Lord and the Presbyterian Church USA has been a true privilege. My journey of faith has been greatly enhanced by those I have met along the way. I look forward to whatever the Good Lord has in store for me.

*(Gary Gibson, Commissioned Pastor North Buffalo Presbyterian Church & Chaplain and Director of Pastoral Care Presbyterian Senior Care Washington Campus – Washington Presbytery)*

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“You could never be a lay pastor! You have not studied the Bethel Bible Series and you have not studied the Kerygma Program--Old or New Testament. Why would ever think that you could be a lay preacher?” so said a woman who had been preaching in my home church. I had asked her about the educational process to become a lay preacher and that was her answer. Never ever tell me that I can’t do something because I will prove you wrong every time!

Up to that point, I had never given any thought to preaching the Word of God. Because of that woman’s careless remark I signed up for the next class offered by Upper Ohio Valley Presbytery and was accepted. That was in 1992 and I have been so blessed by something that had not entered my mind prior to that conversation. By 1994, I was finished with the class and preaching throughout my presbytery.

Fast forward to 2016 and I know that even though it may not have been the way to do something, it was exactly what I had been searching for most of my adult life. Being able to reach out to people and help them in times of need or times of joy is a blessing—a great blessing!

Being a Commissioned Pastor is right for me because my roots are firmly established in the Ohio Valley and I did not have the luxury of moving hither and yon for a call had I been a Teaching Elder. There are so many reasons why the commissioned route is right for me, but the biggest reason is that I am following not only my heart, I am following God’s direction for me.

*(Connie Quinn, Commissioned Pastor First United Presbyterian Church of Bellaire – Upper Ohio Valley)*

## How the Program Works

There are three components to this 4 semester program.

### Courses (all 4 required)

These classes have face-to-face meetings at least three times during the 15 week term. There will be online assignments also. They will be common to the whole cohort.

- |                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Biblical Literacy – Part 1  | Fall        |
| 2. Biblical Literacy – Part 2  | Spring      |
| 3. Reformed Theology           | Fall 2017   |
| 4. Reformed Worship/Sacraments | Spring 2018 |

### Workshops (participate in 6; 4 are required)

The workshops will be led at each presbytery on a rotating basis. The format will be a 3-4 hour session on one day. You may attend the workshop in any presbytery to find a date that best suits your schedule. These may be taken simultaneously with the Courses.

<u>Required</u>	<u>Elective Examples</u>
Ethics/Boundaries	Advanced Reformed Theology
Pastoral Care	Advanced Scriptures
Polity	Church Leadership
Proclaiming the Word	Evangelism
	Spiritual Formation

### Field Education/Practicum

*(participate in each after completing the prerequisite)*

Each Field Education/Practicum will be under the direction of an experienced supervisor.

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Prerequisite Workshop</u>
➤ Church Administration	Polity
➤ Pastoral Care	Pastoral Care
➤ Preaching	Proclaiming the Word
➤ Worship/Sacraments	Polity and Proclaiming the Word

## Cost

### Coursework

The cost to the participant is  
**\$250 per term for tuition.**

That is a total cost of \$1000  
for the coursework.

*All checks should be made payable to "Redstone."*



## How to Apply

- Remove the Application/Endorsement form from the center of this booklet.
- Complete the application sections (*Part 1 and Part 2*).
- Meet with your Session for their endorsement and signature.
- Contact your presbytery to meet with the appropriate committee for their endorsement and signature.
- Once completed, return Application and Endorsements to:

Cheryl Rhea  
Registrar  
448 Guy St  
Jeannette, PA 15644

or electronically to  
IPLF.reg@comcast.net



### Books and Supplies

Some books will be provided  
by the program.

However, you will be responsible to purchase  
additional books and supplies.

### **Subsidized by**

the presbyteries of

Kiskiminetas, Redstone, Upper Ohio Valley, and Washington.



**The Synod of the Trinity**  
provided grant money  
to underwrite the cost of  
the establishment of this program.

**PRESBYTERY COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT**

*Ruling Elders in Particular Pastoral Service Program  
Presbyteries of Kiskiminetas, Redstone,  
Washington, & Upper Ohio Valley*

Our presbytery committee has met with

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We affirm this person's sense of call and  
endorse his/her application to begin the program.

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Committee of Presbytery

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Signature of Chair of Committee

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Date

**SESSION ENDORSEMENT**

*Please consider how your Session might support this person –  
prayer, mentor, financial support, other ways.*

Name of applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long has this person been a member of your congregation, and in what ways has he/she contributed to the ministry/mission of your congregation?
  
2. What gifts do you believe this person possesses to become a Commissioned Pastor?
  
3. Are there any barriers that will keep this person from being able to fulfill this special calling?
  
4. Is there any additional information about this person that would be helpful for us to know?
  
5. Is your Session able to support this person in one of the ways mentioned in the box above?

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Moderator or Clerk of Session

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Date

