

G-14.0801 **Commissioned Lay Pastor**

*Local Commission to Provide Pastoral Services*

**G-14.0801a.** The **commissioned lay pastor** is an elder of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is granted a local commission by the presbytery to lead worship and preach the gospel, watch over the people, and provide for their nurture and service. This commission is valid only in one or more congregations, new church development, or other validated ministries of the presbytery designated by the presbytery. Such an elder is selected by and receives training approved by the presbytery. The elder shall be instructed in Bible, Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, and teaching. The elder shall be examined by the appropriate committee of presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction mentioned previously. An elder who has been **commissioned** and later ceases to serve in a particular congregation may continue to be listed as available to serve, but is not authorized to perform the functions of a **commissioned lay pastor** again until appointed to a particular congregation by the presbytery.

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Amend (1998, 162, 16.0159, 401, NMD Rec.): Added "new church development, or other validated ministries of the presbytery" between the words "congregations" and "designated" in the second sentence.

Amend (1996, 257, 21.077, 370, 33.0104ff.): Moved CLP provisions from G-14.0516 to G-14.0801 and expanded permissive authority to allow a CLP to perform baptisms and marriages, moderate session meetings, and have voice and vote in Pby.

Amend (1995, 294, 21.167, 675, Ovt. 95-23): Changed "**commissioned lay preacher**" to "**commissioned lay pastor**."

Amend Rejected (2001, 43, 398, Ovt. 01-7; 2000, 55, 465, Ovt. 00-81): Rejected request to direct OGA and PCC to develop standardized exams for CLPs and to amend BO to include the exam process.

Amend Referred (2001, 43, 412, Ovt. 01-13): Proposal to allow the recognition of ordination of elders from other churches to facilitate service as CLPs was referred to OGA, Final: 214th (Item 00-02, p. 105 (Not on CD.))

GA (1998, 165, 16.0199, Req. 98-4): There is no provision for laypersons **commissioned** for pastoral ministry by other denominations to administer the sacraments, perform weddings, or moderate session.

GA (1997, 182, 21.0221, 1996 Ref.): No amendment needed to allow a CLP to serve as a supply preacher (**Referral: 1996, 60, Floor Motion** (Not on CD.)).

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*Period Valid*

**G-14.0801b.** The commission shall be valid for a period up to three years as determined by the presbytery. It may be renewed at expiration or terminated at any time at the discretion of the presbytery. Presbytery shall regularly provide resources for the person's spiritual and intellectual development. A review of the work of the **commissioned lay pastor** shall be conducted annually. Presbytery shall revoke

the commission of any **lay pastor** who does not abide by these provisions or whose work is evaluated as not adequate to meet the needs of the particular congregation or the presbytery.

### ***Authorization to Perform Functions***

**G-14.0801c.** When a presbytery, in consultation with the session or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission in a local church requires it, and after additional instruction deemed necessary by the presbytery has been provided, a presbytery may authorize a **commissioned lay pastor** to perform any or all of the following functions described in (1)--(6) below.

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Amend ([1997, 180, 21.0186, Req. 97-3](#)): Struck a second sentence which allowed as an exception that a person who is not an elder could be made a CLP.

Amend ([1984, 592, 55.009, Ovt. 8-84, 103-84](#)): See at [G-11.0103k](#).

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**G-14.0801c.(1)** Administer the Lord's Supper.

**G-14.0801c.(2)** Administer the Sacrament of Baptism.

**G-14.0801c.(3)** Moderate the session of the congregation under the supervision of and when invited by the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery.

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GA ([1997, 181, 21.0197, Req. 97-4](#)): If CLP is "moderator" of session, he or she may lead a service of ordination and installation of elders and deacons.

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**G-14.0801c.(4)** Have a voice in meetings of presbytery.

**G-14.0801c.(5)** Have a vote in meetings of the presbytery (such vote to be counted as an elder commissioner for purposes of parity).

**G-14.0801c.(6)** Perform a service of Christian marriage when invited by the session or other responsible committee, and when allowed by the state.

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Amend ([1996, 257, 21.077, 370, 33.104-116](#)): Expanded functions of CLPs. Overtures from previous years answered by action.

GA (1990, 247, 21.226, Req. 90-21; 1988, 138, 12.201, Req. 2-88; 1987, 149, 15.234, Com. 12-87):  
See at [G-14.0307](#).

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### ***Supervision***

**G-14.0801d.** The **commissioned lay pastor** shall work under the supervision of the presbytery through the moderator of the session of the church being served or through the committee on ministry. A minister of the Word and Sacrament shall be assigned as a mentor and supervisor.

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Amend (1996, 257, 21.077, 370, 33.104): Clarified supervision of CLP.

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### ***Moderator of Session***

**G-14.0801e.** A presbytery, when it deems it to be in the best interest of the presbytery and the church involved, and when it deems that the **lay pastor commissioned** to that church is sufficiently trained in and loyal to Presbyterian polity, may appoint a **lay pastor** as moderator of session to the church to which she or he is **commissioned**. The person assigned to the **commissioned lay pastor** as mentor and supervisor shall also supervise his or her work as moderator.

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Amend (1999, 60, 577, Ovt. 99-4): Added a new section "e" to allow a pby to appoint a CLP as moderator for church to which CLP is **commissioned**.

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### ***Trust and Confidentiality***

**G-14.0801f.** In the exercise of pastoral care, **commissioned lay pastors** shall maintain a relationship of trust and confidentiality, and shall hold in confidence all information revealed to them in the course of providing such care and all information relating to the exercise of such care. When the person whose confidences are at issue gives express consent to reveal confidential information, then a **commissioned lay pastor** may, but cannot be compelled to, reveal confidential information. A **commissioned lay pastor** may reveal confidential information when she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of imminent bodily harm to any person.

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Amend (1999, 60, 375, 25.182-.183): Added a new "f" stating requirements for confidentiality in exercise of pastoral care.

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### ***Questions Asked***

**G-14.0801g.** When the presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of an applicant it shall ask the applicant the following questions:

**G-14.0801g.(1)** Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

**G-14.0801g.(2)** Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?

**G-14.0801g.(3)** Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

**G-14.0801g.(4)** Will you fulfill your commission in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

**G-14.0801g.(5)** Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

**G-14.0801g.(6)** Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

**G-14.0801g.(7)** Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

**G-14.0801g.(8)** Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

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Amend Rejected ([1999, 60, 573, Ovt. 99-1](#)): Rejected additional question ("Do you promise to subject yourself to your brothers and sisters in the Lord?") for elders serving as CLPs.

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**G-14.0801g.(9)** Will you be a faithful **commissioned lay pastor**, watching over the people, providing for their worship? In your

ministry, will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?  
([G-14.0207](#))

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Amend ([1995, 294, 21.167, 675, Ovt. 95-23](#)): Changed "commissioned lay preacher" to "commissioned lay pastor".

Amend Rejected ([1989, 211, 21.010, Ovt. 88-158](#)): Rejected request to add ordination and installation question on peacemaking and evangelism.

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***Prayer and Statement***

**G-14.0801h.** The applicant having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall pray and say to the applicant:

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_, you are now a lay pastor commissioned to lead worship and preach for the time and in the place set by this presbytery. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

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Amend ([1995, 294, 21.167, 675, Ovt. 95-23](#)): Changed "commissioned lay preacher" to "commissioned lay pastor".  
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