

The Routes to Ordination

The CRC has two offices of ordained pastoral ministry: the office of minister of the Word and the office of commissioned pastor. The routes to minister of the Word and commissioned pastor are described in Church Order Articles 6, 7 8, and 23, cited below, and explained in this document.

Church Order Article 6 addresses those who prepare for the ministry through academic training that leads to a Master of Divinity (M.Div) degree.

- a. The completion of a satisfactory theological training shall be required for admission to the ministry of the Word.
- b. Graduates of the theological seminary of the Christian Reformed Church who have been declared candidates for the ministry of the Word by synod shall be eligible for call.
- c. Those who have been trained elsewhere shall not be eligible for call unless they have met the requirements stipulated in the synodical regulations and have been declared by synod to be candidates for the ministry of the Word.

Church Order Article 7 makes provision for those who have not obtained the prescribed theological training but give evidence of exceptional giftedness and a “native ability” to preach the Word.

- a. Those who have not received the prescribed theological training but give evidence that they are singularly gifted as to godliness, humility, spiritual discretion, wisdom, and the native ability to preach the Word, may, by way of exception, be admitted to the ministry of the Word.
- b. Those preparing for the ordained ministry under the provisions of this article are required to complete the Modified Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (MEPMC).
- c. This route to ordination is rarely used due to development of the office of Article 23 commissioned pastor.

Church Order Article 8 provides a means for ministers who have been ordained in another denomination to enter the ministry of the Word in the CRC.

- a. Ministers of the Christian Reformed Church are eligible for call, with due observance of the relevant rules.
- b. Ministers of the Reformed Church in America are eligible for call to serve in the Christian Reformed Church, with due observance of the relevant rules.
- c. Ministers of other denominations desiring to become ministers in the Christian Reformed Church shall be required to complete the Modified Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (MEPMC).
- d. Ministers of other denominations who have not been declared eligible for a call shall not be called unless all synodical requirements have been met.

Article 23

a. Commissioned pastors shall be acknowledged as **such in** their calling churches with corresponding privileges and responsibilities. Normally, their work **on the church council** shall be limited to the ministries in which they serve as commissioned pastors.

b. Ordinarily, the office of commissioned pastors who serve in emerging congregations will terminate when a group of believers becomes an organized church. However, upon organization and with the approval of the newly formed council and the classis, commissioned pastors may continue to serve the newly organized church until an ordained minister of the Word is installed or until they have served the newly organized church for a reasonable period of transition. Commissioned pastors who continue to serve a newly organized congregation

beyond this reasonable period of transition must seek the permission of classis with the concurrence of the synodical deputies.

c. Commissioned pastors may also serve in organized congregations along with a minister of the Word and may serve as chaplains in institutional settings in the community. Commissioned pastors who have served an organized congregation along with a minister of the Word may, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of classis and the concurrence of synodical deputies, continue serving that congregation as a solo pastor after the minister of the Word has left.

d. Commissioned pastors may be called to serve as solo pastors in organized congregations if the classis, with the concurring advice of synodical deputies, ascertaining that such congregations are from a ministry context where the standards for pastoral preparation required by Articles 6, 7, or 8 are not presently practical.

e. Commissioned pastors who desire to serve beyond their specific field of labor must secure the approval of their consistories and classes.

Note: You can also consult the [Commissioned Pastors Handbook](#) for a compilation of these and other documents that discuss the policies and practices of the office of commissioned pastors in the CRC. This handbook is available on the Candidacy Committee web site, and by contacting Rev. David Koll (dkoll@crcna.org).