

PARTNERS IN MINISTRY
UPDATED MANUAL

FROM THE EOA CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

CERTIFIED PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

44. A MEMBER OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OR DISCIPLES OF CHRIST LIVING WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDS OF THIS ASSOCIATION DESIRING TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED FOR MINISTRY MAY APPLY FOR THE PARTNERS IN MINISTRY PROGRAM.
45. THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE PARTNERS IN MINISTRY, UNDER AUTHORIZATION OF THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH AND EDUCATION, SHALL RECEIVE AND REVIEW APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE PARTNERS IN MINISTRY PROGRAM.
46. THE PARTNER IN MINISTRY CANDIDATE SHALL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS AS SET FORTH BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE.
47. UPON SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THOSE REQUIREMENTS AND A RECOMMENDATION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE TO THE ASSOCIATION COUNCIL, A CANDIDATE SHALL BE CERTIFIED AS A PARTNER IN MINISTRY.
48. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS OF CERTIFIED PARTNER IN MINISTRY, PERSONS SHALL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS AS SET FORTH BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE.



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

PURPOSE AND GOAL

Partners in Ministry is an educational program offered by the Eastern Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ as a means of helping lay leaders to expand their knowledge and skills. The program provides courses in a variety of areas which may lead to certification through completion of the program requirements.

Anyone is welcome to take courses for personal enrichment whether or not they are working toward certification. The courses are designed to strengthen discipleship, broaden one's understanding of commitment, and enrich one's personal faith journey.

The goal of the program is to strengthen the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ by equipping those who serve "In His Name."

THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

"Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18

"For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Romans 12:4, 5

When Jesus gave the "Great Commission," the people went forth using their faith, the education they had, the means of communication of their day, and their limited way of travel. Similarly today, we serve our Lord in the United Church of Christ, using the abilities God has given us, and are in this world seeking to be faithful in discipleship and service.

Those who have been called into the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ have accepted a great responsibility. Those who have been called to serve as lay leaders of the church do so with equal responsibility. In harmony with each other and with God, both are uniquely called to further the work of the church of Jesus Christ.

Our duty lies in assisting each other in fulfilling these commitments to our Lord and to our church. It is in this spirit that the Eastern Ohio Association offers the **Partners in Ministry** program for those who through training would like to better equip themselves for ministry.

AREAS OF SERVICE

The following suggestions are areas of service within the United Church of Christ where a trained lay person may be called according to his or her level of training and the needs of the church or association to:

- licensed ministry
 - lay preaching;
 - be a liturgist in worship;
 - lead committees and boards;
 - lead workshops;
 - direct Christian Education;
 - train church school teachers;
 - coordinate Vacation Bible School;
 - teach children, youth, and adults;
 - lead Bible studies;
 - assist with confirmation class leadership;
 - be an advisor for youth groups;
 - work in special after school programs;
 - assist with new member classes;
 - do training for Caring Ministry programs;
- and many other ways depending on the needs of the local or wider church.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

I. STEERING COMMITTEE

The program is sponsored by the EOA Departments of Church and Ministry and Church and-Education and is governed by a **STEERING COMMITTEE** of eleven members with guidance from the Associate Association Minister. The committee is made of up one representative from each of the above departments plus six certified lay persons, two who are elected at each Annual Convocation of the Partners in Ministry, for a term of three years. Two student representatives who have been accepted and who are active in the program are elected at the convocation for a one-year term. A person retiring must be off the Committee for one year before being eligible for re-election. The staff member and representatives of the Department of Ministry and the Department of Education will serve ex-officio. The Committee meets monthly except during the months of July and December. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

The Steering Committee is available to give guidance and assistance, when needed, to all PIM participants. The Steering Committee members are available to receive any concerns and/or recommendations to keep the PIM program functioning smoothly and to maintain a high quality of training.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

Those who wish to be received into the Partners in Ministry program will need to meet the following requirements:

- a. Be a member of a United Church of Christ or Disciples of Christ congregation;
- b. Make formal application of admission to the Steering Committee. The application form is located on the EOA website at www.eoaucc.org. Click on "Partners in Ministry" link to access all PIM information. Contact the EOA office if you do not have access to the web.
- c. Two letters of recommendation are to accompany the application form. One of the letters is to be written by the minister of the local church where the applicant is a member.
- d. An interview will be scheduled with the Steering Committee prior to the beginning of classes.

Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year. However, entry interviews are only conducted in August and September. Entry into the program begins in the fall (Sept/Oct) with completion of "Journey Through Self Discovery", a spiritual gifts workshop. Normal class rotation begins in the winter (Jan/Feb).

Permission can be given by the Steering Committee for a church member to register for a class prior to them submitting an application. This single course waiver is available to church members who have an interest in a specific class or a person who wishes to evaluate whether the program is appropriate for their faith walk.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All participants are required to complete 11 courses in the “Certification Program”. These courses are as follows:

- Introduction to Biblical Studies
- Old Testament I
- Old Testament II
- New Testament I
- New Testament II
- Introduction to Theology
- Spiritual Disciplines
- Leadership
- Polity
- Church History
- Personal Ethics

Upon completion of these courses, a participant will be eligible for certification. A written summary and reflection of one’s growth experience and an interview with the Steering Committee is required for the granting of this status.

- Attendance at classes is required. Make-up assignments for one excused absence (for classes with 3-5 sessions) or up to two excused absences (for classes with 6-8 sessions) must be negotiated with the instructor.
- The Steering Committee, in conjunction with the instructor, reserves the right to cancel a course should there be insufficient enrollment. The target minimum number of registered students is six. If five are registered, those students can unanimously agree to pay an additional \$10 to proceed with the class. If four are registered, those students can unanimously agree to pay an additional \$25 to proceed with the class. If the class is cancelled, registrants would be notified and their money refunded.
- Equivalent courses offered in the Western Reserve Association Lay School of the Church will be accepted toward the requirements.

IV. CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE

In order to establish goals for each course and to maintain consistency each time a course is offered, a Curriculum Review Committee has been established. The committee is appointed by the Steering Committee and consists of Certified Partners in Ministry and instructors who have taught in the program. The committee meets with the instructor of each required course prior to when it is offered to review the plans for the course and to revise or clarify goals as needed.

V. MINISTRY PATHS PROGRAM

Some people will feel a calling to do further study which, in some cases, may even lead to authorized ministry. For those who feel this calling, a discernment interview will be scheduled under the direction of the Department of Church & Ministry. Based on the results of the interview, a recommended course of study will be developed.

VI. ELECTIVES

Elective courses are optional courses that focus on specific areas of ministry or topics of special interest. Some of these courses are advanced and may have prerequisites. These courses may be used for recertification or re-accreditation.

VII. INSTRUCTOR/CLASS SIZE

Instructors are paid an honorarium established by the Steering Committee per course taught. If the class enrollment is insufficient, the instructor has the option of canceling the class or accepting a stipend on per student basis.

VIII. RECOGNITION

The Eastern Ohio Association will give recognition to all Certified and Accredited persons at its Annual Meeting and grant them the privilege of voice and vote. A local church can enhance its total program by using the abilities of persons who have completed the requirements for certification or accreditation. A service of recognition is recommended expressing support to the Certified or Accredited lay person, acknowledging their efforts and their achievement.

IX. CONVOCATION

Each year, a Convocation is held in the Fall of the year. Attendance is mandatory for all members. This is a time for enrichment, fellowship, worship and the time to conduct the business of the PIM Program. **Everyone in the program, certified or uncertified, must attend the Annual PIM Convocation.**

No business or motion may be brought to the floor without prior approval from the Steering Committee, which is the business committee of the PIM Program. Requests should be submitted in writing 30 days prior to the date of the meeting.

X. VOTING

All participants working toward certification or who have been accepted into the program may vote at the **Annual Convocation.**

XI. SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE

Local churches are encouraged to help pay for the costs involved for their members who are a part of this program. A scholarship fund has been established to help defray the costs of textbooks and courses for those that need assistance. Please contact the chair of the Steering Committee or Associate Association Minister if you would like to request funds. Contributions to this fund are always welcome.