Responsibilities of the entity overseeing preparation for ministry

In providing pastoral care, guidance and support to inquirers and candidates it is imperative that the presbytery’s committee show sensitivity to each individual’s unique background, experience, level of maturity and personal attributes. If growth is to be effectively nurtured, members of the committee must understand and accept the individual where he or she is at each stage of the process. With the committee’s help and encouragement the inquirer or candidate will take increasing responsibility for moving through the process and in planning for and evaluating his or her own development.

The preparation for ministry process demands that the roles, expectations and responsibilities of inquirers or candidates and other covenant partners representing the congregation and the presbytery be made clear from the beginning. The negotiation and regular review and renewal of a formal covenant relationship is an important step toward mutual understanding.

Presbyteries should also identify particular services, resources and experiences that can enhance the growth and development of inquirers and candidates under their guidance. These include vocational development counseling, psychological evaluations, clinical pastoral education opportunities, internships in churches, cross-cultural experiences, specialized ministries and other opportunities for personal and spiritual growth. Such services and experiences may be recommended as individuals’ needs are identified during the evaluation process.

Establish clear lines of communication for how your presbytery’s work with inquirers and candidates will relate to other presbytery staff and entities as well as with counterparts in other presbyteries.