

P.S.C.E. – Presbyterians Supporting Christian Education

Union Presbyterian Seminary

SUPPORTING THOSE SERVING IN ALL AREAS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS (CRE/CP)

OUR COHORT INITIATIVE ...

Union Presbyterian Seminary's PSCE initiative continues to raise the profile of those serving in all areas of Christian Education and has expanded to the support of those serving as CRE/CP (Commissioned Ruling Elder/Commissioned Pastor).

WHAT MAKES OUR COHORTS UNIQUE?

- Cohorts meet 10-12 times in a calendar year.
- Stipends are paid to participants twice a year (total \$500) to cover the cost of all materials for the cohorts.
- Cohort meeting times, topics and formats are decided by those in the cohort. The cohort can choose to meet on a specific day each month, or change the day each month.
- Facilitators are provided who are prepared to help with the administration of the cohort, and to help facilitate the work of the scheduled meetings.

HOW DO I APPLY?

- Complete the Application Form linked here for either Educator or CRE/CP.
- Choose the days and times that best work for you.
- Each applicant is evaluated by the PSCE Board of Directors.
- If you are selected, complete a W-9 IRS form to allow Union Presbyterian Seminary to issue stipend checks to you.

WHAT WILL THE FOCUS BE?

EACH COHORT DECIDES!

WHAT WILL THE COST BE FOR ME?

None - PSCE cohorts are supported by the initiative, and participants receive a stipend for your participation, and to offset the cost of any materials

WHAT WILL BE THE STRUCTURE AND FOCUS OF MY COHORT?

Your cohort will decide this together

WHAT WILL I HAVE TO ORGANIZE AND MANAGE?

Nothing – Your cohort facilitator will handle this – you just mark the meetings in your calendar

WILL I HAVE TO TRAVEL TO BE IN A COHORT?

No! All cohorts meet on Zoom. All you need is a computer/laptop/tablet/phone that has a camera and microphone

WHY NOT JOIN US?

No reason! You are invited to complete the brief application which is found at

<https://www.upsem.edu/psce/>

BE PART OF THIS INITIATIVE!

For further information, contact

[Marilyn Johns](#), Registrar

Continuing the legacy of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS COHORTS

The ministry of Commissioned Ruling Elder/Commissioned Pastor (CRE/CP) is a treasured aspect of service in the PCUSA. The purpose of the CRE/CP initiative, an expansion of the Presbyterians Supporting Christian Education (PSCE) program, is to strive to provide collegial, personal, and professional support through cohorts with others who are serving as a solo CRE/CP in a church.

Each participant must have a current commission in effect, serving as solo pastor in a congregation. Topics for engagement by participants may include spiritual disciplines and practices, seasonal needs in the church's program year (i.e., Advent, church school, Session meetings, educational opportunities), and the sharing of the needs and concerns of each participant. Preparation for meetings may include short reading assignments.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COHORTS

For the sixth year, Union Presbyterian Seminary is providing a program of support and encouragement for Christian educators by providing cohorts.

This program continues the legacy of the great institution, the Presbyterian School of Christian Education.

Educators (lay and professional) and Ministers are invited to participate in one of the cohorts for the 2026 calendar year. The cohorts will meet monthly and will provide the following:

- Collegial and collaborative experiences for participants.
- Personal and professional opportunities for growth
- A sharing of resources for the educational ministry of the church

Apply at upsem.edu/psce today!

CRE Testimonies

Being a CRE means having few peers--not a teaching elder, but with more responsibilities than a typical ruling elder. The PSCE program provides peer support that I have found to be crucial in my development as a church leader. When I learn about other people's ministries, I gain insight into my own. My cohort was also instrumental in helping me determine what the next step is for my ministry. They brought a wealth of experience and a variety of perspectives that led me to a decision that enables me to follow God's call.

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This is what I wrote to the CREs/CPs in our presbytery last year: I am writing to tell you about a great opportunity for networking and support for your work as a lay pastor. Union Presbyterian Seminary is developing cohorts for CREs/CLPs. These cohorts are made up of Presbyterian lay pastors from across the country. They meet by zoom for approximately two hours once a month for one year. The purpose of the gatherings is to learn from and support each other in their ministry. In addition to the wonderful support and wealth of knowledge that is shared, each participant is paid a stipend for taking part in the cohort. I would encourage each of you to prayerfully consider participating in this endeavor. I have participated in a cohort for the past year and have found it to be very beneficial. Not only have I learned from my fellow participants, but the support has been just what I needed during some very stressful times. Since most of us serve as solo pastors, we don't have many opportunities to engage with other pastors. The cohort gives you that opportunity.

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The CRE Cohorts has impacted my ministry by allowing me to share some of my most personal concerns with a group of people from diverse backgrounds but similar foundational beliefs. Being able to meet monthly has been a wonderful opportunity to hear from others who are experiencing similar issues and surviving. The individuals in these groups have provided a support team who provides insight, discernment, wisdom, and prayer.

I am so glad that someone thought to invite me to get involved during my first year of serving as a commissioned pastor. Being able to share and listen to others has likely helped me to survive many of the challenges of serving in a small church that does not fit the mold of most of those churches I did pulpit supply in as I prepared for this journey.

Thank you for the opportunity!

Educator Testimonies

I am brand new to working in faith formation as a professional, and have no formal training. I am learning SO MUCH from my cohort, everything from hearing about new resources and sources of information, to hearing what other churches have tried and how it is working, to reading and discussing best practices for what we do. I find all of it extremely useful in guiding my decision making and pointing me in the right direction to gain the tools I'll need to do this job well.

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Personally it is helpful to have people to talk to who are experiencing similar things I am in this season with the church and a pandemic or have experienced things I am currently dealing with which for me is a mom in ministry with 2 very young children.

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I have implemented several ideas from the cohort. The group has more experience than I do as a lay educator. They introduced me to a film series we now use for our teens. They gave me ideas on how to manage a coffee house Sunday School. I purchased a book that was suggested for our children's table during Advent.