

## **My CRE Experience**

By John Yeager, CRE, Eleanor Presbyterian

*The following is the first in a series highlighting PWV's Authorized Lay Preacher/Commissioned Ruling Elder Program. In September, we begin a new set of Presby Prep courses, which are prerequisites for this program. [Click here](#) for more information about Presby Prep. Is God tugging at your heart to participate? Presby Prep is a great way to learn more.*

In 1978, after making a decision for Christ and coming back to the faith of my childhood at the age of 24, I was baptized. The morning after, I awoke to a room full of radiant light. At that point, I did not know the difference between a “call” and the whisper of a still small voice. The memory of that morning hounded me for 30 years.

In 2004, I was an elder at Bates Memorial, and Rev. Dana Sutton asked me to lead worship. Rev Arvie Maynard gave me an example as someone who left his engineering job, received his divinity degree and became a pastor. Arvie also had me placed on the Nominating Committee. I was able to learn about the liturgy and the workings of the Presbytery.

Pat Collier asked me to join him in the ALP/CRE training, but at the time, family health issues made it impossible. In 2009, a new class was offered. I'll never forget sitting in our dimly lit family room at twilight with the unopened ALP/CRE application packet in my lap. A still small voice whispered, “It’s time.”

For the next three years, I was surrounded by wonderful instructors and classmates one weekend a month. Susan Sharp Campbell did an extraordinary job insuring we were trained and ready to take on a job like no other. Our class developed a bond that lasts today.

The training concluded in September 2012. Since I planned to retire in December 2014, that gave me two years to “practice” with pulpit supply. I preached two to three times a month. The discipline of writing sermons on a regular basis would prove invaluable for me.

The path God was laying out for me became clearer and clearer. In January 2015, right after my retirement, Eleanor Presbyterian would need a pastor. I became their pastor then.

To say it has been the most rewarding part of my life would be an understatement. And God had a plan. I was able to use my project management skills to help guide a \$100,000 unplanned restoration caused by a water line break. My writing skills were honed to the point where I wrote a book to help with small group Bible study and as a devotional. (Visit [www.calledtolove.co](http://www.calledtolove.co).) Finally, my favorite part of the week is our children's sermon. That's when I see the light of God's Spirit in the eyes of the young souls whom God has entrusted to our care.