

My ALP/CRE Experience

By Bill Dunfee, CRE, Westminster Presbyterian, Vienna

The following is part of 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.

I took the ALP/CRE classes from 2004 to 2006. I was hesitant to take the classes and commit the time that would be involved. I was working at the post office around 50 hours a week, filling in as a temporary pastor at Westminster Presbyterian in Vienna and still had my youngest two sons in school. I didn't see how I had time to handle all of that. At my wife's urging, I entered the program. I cannot tell you how happy I am that I did.

The classes were interesting and fulfilling. The two years flew by. The friendships that I made were wonderful. Kathryn was a great leader, and those that led the classes did a wonderful job. I had to "get out of my box," which, like most people, I'm hesitant to do, but sometimes, that is something we need to do in order to grow.

I learned and grew much during the two years. After finishing in 2006, I became CRE at Westminster. I am now beginning my 15th year (13th as CLP) there, and it has been a wonderful experience. I continue to learn and grow from this experience of serving. I had never thought about being a pastor in my life and serving God in that way, but I started feeling the "tug" by the Spirit as I entered my 40s. And I'm glad I listened to His call.

At the time I took the classes, we met every other Saturday from September to May for two years. As I said, I thought I didn't have time in my schedule to go every time and do the work and also continue with all my other responsibilities. But when you do what God is leading you to do, He will see that you have the time and that it will work out. And it did for me. In fact, I continued to work at the post office until two years ago, and God continued to lead me as a bi-vocational pastor.

The rewards from all of that continue to amaze me. Along with being a husband, father and grandfather, this is one of the greatest blessings in my life. I am 61 years old, retired now, and greatly enjoying serving the Lord each day. I hope to continue to for many years to come.

If you are feeling led to enter the ALP/CRE program and are having doubts, take it from one who has been there. Please do it. I honestly feel you will be glad that you did, and you will feel blessed in your journey.