

## Ordination Examinations Next Steps in the POJ

### Examination Committee Philosophy

There is no work more sacred than walking with people on their faith journey. We recognize that we have been gifted with a sacred treasure as we accompany those whom God has called to ministry. We are reminded of how Jesus walked with those he called. In the gospels, we see Jesus both gently and firmly guide his disciples, training and teaching them along their journey together. His presence with them was loving and kind, as well as challenging.

We take seriously our role as members of the Examinations Committee and draw our inspiration from Jesus' example. We see Jesus asking questions that are meant to help his followers both gain and deepen understanding. Therefore, we spend significant time asking questions that are both personal and theological. The experience of the disciples with their guide was one in which trust and support deepened and one in which they thrived and grew.

As members of the Examinations Committee, we believe that we are called to emulate Jesus' example, to act as guides and companions to those who come before us, to listen and to question, and to invite them to grow in their understanding.

In I Corinthians 4:1-2, Paul writes: "Think of us in this way – as stewards of Christ and servants of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards to be found trustworthy." As we bear witness to God's mysteries every time we gather with those whom God has called, we strive to be trustworthy stewards of the holy process of examination.

### Next Steps in the Examination Process

The Commission on Ministry is empowered by the POJ to act on its behalf in examining candidates for ministry of the Word and Sacrament. The POJ's two-step examination process is as follows:

**Step One:** Candidates for ordination are examined by the Examinations Committee for suitability, theology, and views. The Examinations Committee makes its recommendation to the Commission on Ministry. Upon approval by the Commission, the candidate is received and their ordination or ordination and installation service planning can begin. The service must be scheduled to occur *after* the presbytery meeting when they are presented.

**Step Two:** The final step of the examination process occurs at the presbytery meeting where the candidate is presented and required to share with the POJ the following:

1. Their choice of one of the following (15-20 minutes total) followed by questions related to their presentation:
  - preaching a sermon;
  - teaching a lesson;
  - providing an exposition of some aspect of the ministry to which they are called (for example, a candidate called to chaplaincy may expound upon how they, as a Presbyterian chaplain, share their faith and witness in a multi-faith, multicultural, or even non-faith context).
2. Their personal faith journey ... “Describe some of the highlights of the faith journey that has brought you to the point where you are standing before this presbytery today.”

While no questions will be taken from the floor of the presbytery as a whole, the POJ will be asked to vote on the motion that this final step of the candidate’s ordination examination be sustained.

Our denomination is one that affirms that theology and views matter. We ask that the body of the presbytery trust that the candidates have been thoroughly tested and examined on and for those views multiple times along the path to ordination, including in the first step of this final ordination examination process.

In the second step of the examination (before the presbytery), we believe that the primary tone should be one of affirmation of the candidate’s gifts for ministry and celebration of the candidate achieving this significant milestone in their faith journey.

### **Our Prayer**

*God of all who journey, you are holy presence and wholly present.*

*There is not one step we take that you are not beside us, you hem us in, behind and before, and your hand is forever and always upon us.*

*Lay your hand upon us as we serve you as companions and guides and teachers to inquirers, candidates, and ministers of your Word.*

*Give us patience and humility to listen and tender courage to question as we walk alongside those within our care.*

*Help us to be faithful in our work and persistent in our prayer as we do our work, guiding those you have called to serve your church.*

*Remind us always of the mystery that surrounds your call so that we might do our work with reverence and awe.*

*For those who are seeking and for those who are following your call, we ask your blessing upon them.*

*In your mercy and by your grace, make us servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Amen.*