

Procedure for Ordination Examination at Presbytery Meeting

Following COM's review of each candidate's call for ordination and of his or her suitability for that call, COM shall bring its recommendation for his or her examination to the presbytery. The moderator or other designated member of the Examinations Subcommittee shall explain to the presbytery this procedure to be used by the presbytery in conducting examinations on the floor of presbytery. Moreover, each time the presbytery is to examine a candidate for ordination, the packet of docket information shall include a summary of the examination procedures. See also the *Book of Order*, G-14.0482.

A representative of COM shall introduce the candidate to the presbytery, give the page number of the candidate's PIF in the meeting packet, and invite the candidate to preach a sermon as the first part of his or her examination. When there are multiple candidates for examination, the candidates' preaching may be scheduled concurrently.

Then each candidate shall appear before the whole presbytery. The moderator or other designated member of the Examinations Subcommittee shall conduct the remainder of the examination. The presbytery shall complete each individual candidate's examination before examining any other candidate.

The candidate shall make a brief statement of faith and of his or her commitment to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. His or her written statement of faith shall be made available for the presbytery in the packet of meeting materials.

Then the moderator or other designated member of the Examinations Subcommittee shall ask questions of the candidate in the areas of theology, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the government of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The COM usually provides the candidate several questions from each of these areas of the examination. The examiner shall ask questions from the group of provided questions.

Questions from the floor shall be allowed at appropriate times during the course of the examination. Only minister members, elder commissioners, and enrolled members of the presbytery may ask such questions. Questions shall be asked of the candidate and shall not consist of discussion or debate among the ministers and elders.

When the examination is completed and there are no more questions from the floor, the examiner shall turn the examination process back to the POJ Moderator. The Moderator shall ask for a motion and second. Any motion to sustain the examination and to approve the ordination must also positively state that the presbytery is satisfied with the candidate's qualifications. If the motion does not state the time and place of the ordination, the COM is authorized to determine those.

To allow for full discussion by the presbytery, the candidate shall leave the meeting hall for the discussion period. Following the vote, the candidate shall return to the meeting and the results of the vote shall be provided to him or her.

If the vote is positive, the Moderator shall advise the presbytery that the ordination service shall not occur for a minimum of two weeks. This avoids doing things with unnecessary haste and provides time should anyone seek to challenge the examination results and vote.

Candidates who successfully complete the examination may be given the opportunity to introduce family members, friends, the nominating committee of the church or agency extending the call, and other guests at the meeting. The Moderator shall then offer a prayer for the candidate and calling church.

The candidate shall be invited to share planning in the ordination service.

Information about Examination of Candidates for Ordination

At the next presbytery meeting, the Committee on Ministry plans to conduct the examination of one or more candidates for ordination as minister of Word and Sacrament. The presbytery invites and urges you, as a minister member, elder commissioner, or enrolled member of presbytery, to participate actively in the examination.

Only minister members, elder commissioners, or enrolled members may ask questions of the candidate, discuss any motion on the examination, or vote on any motion about the examination. If you are a visitor or guest at the meeting, the presbytery invites and welcomes you to observe the examination but also reminds you that you may not ask questions, take part in the discussion, or vote on any motion on the examination.

Prior to the presbytery meeting, the Examinations Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry shall have met with the candidate and with representatives of the calling church or agency. On the basis of their recommendation, the Committee on Ministry shall present the candidate to the presbytery and shall report that the candidate has completed all requirements and has been certified ready for ordination pending approval of the call. A member of the Committee on Ministry shall lead the examination.

For the first part of the examination, the candidate shall select and read a portion of the Scriptures and shall preach on that passage. If there is more than one candidate to be examined, the schedule may be arranged to provide for the candidates to preach concurrently, which means that members of presbytery may not be able to hear all sermons.

For the second part of the examination, the examiner shall ask the candidate to make a brief statement of faith and to express his or her commitment to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Note that some biographical information about the candidate, an education and work record, and a statement of faith have been included in this packet. Then the examiner shall ask the candidate to answer one question in each of the four mandated areas of examination: theology, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

After this, other minister members, elder commissioners, and enrolled members may ask questions of the candidate. When there are no more questions, the Moderator shall ask for a motion and second on the examination. Any motion to sustain the examination and to approve the ordination must also state that the presbytery is satisfied with the candidate's qualifications. If the motion does not state the time and place of the ordination, the Committee on Ministry is authorized to determine those. The candidate shall leave the room to allow full and open discussion. A deciding vote shall be taken.

The presbytery needs your attentiveness to, and participation in, this portion of the meeting in order to help ensure a fair examination of the candidate. Please prepare for the examination and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your decision about the candidate.