

Siblings in Christ,

Greetings and Happy New Year!

As we step into this new season together, I want to extend my heartfelt wishes to each one of you for a year filled with blessings, growth, and the love of Christ.

As we engage in the important work of the National Capital Presbytery, there may be times when we find ourselves in disagreement. In those moments, let us remember that we are all “Siblings in Christ,” bound together by His love. This reminds me of the verses in the Bible that teach us to love our neighbors.

One such verse comes from Leviticus 19:18:

“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”

It is a powerful reminder that, regardless of differences or the outcomes of decisions, we are called to treat one another with decency, kindness, and respect. Let us hold fast to these values as we navigate the work before us.

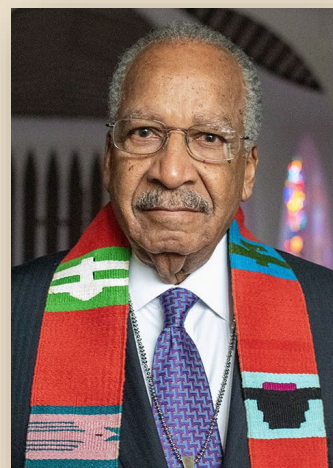
I look forward to gathering with you at the upcoming Stated Meeting of the National Capital Presbytery on Thursday, January 23, 2025.

May God’s peace and joy be with you throughout this year.

Faithfully,

Lou Durden

Moderator, National Capital Presbytery



Stated Meeting
National Capital Presbytery
January 23, 2025
5:00PM at National Presbyterian Church
We Gather in Community

- 5:00 CALL TO ORDER Elder Lou Durden, Moderator
- OPENING PRAYER
- FORMATION OF THE ROLL, DOCKET, OMNIBUS MOTION (p. 3) Rev. David Baer,
Stated Clerk
- 5:10 SERVICE OF COMMISSIONING
- Ruling Elder Kris Maldarelli to service as a Commissioned Ruling Elder at Gaithersburg Presbyterian Church
- 5:20 REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY (p. 4) Rev. Carla Gorrell, Rev. Juli Wilson-Black,
Co-Chairs
- 5:50 REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY (p. 13)
Rev. Blair Moorhead, Chair
- 6:05 PRAYERS FOR DISCERNMENT Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter
- 6:15 REPORT OF THE BILLS AND OVERTURES COMMITTEE (p. 16) Rev. Dean McDonald, Member
- Proposed Amendments 24-A and 24-C
- 6:50 TRANSITIONS / PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter
- 7:00 NEW BUSINESS Elder Lou Durden, Moderator
- CHARGE AND BLESSING Elder Lou Durden, Moderator

Meeting Leaders

Rev. David A. Baer, Stated Clerk
Rev. Dr. Chris Deacon, Moderator
Elder Lou Durden, NCP Moderator
Rev. Carla Gorrell, Commission on Ministry Co-Chair
Elder Jesy Littlejohn, NCP Vice Moderator
Rev. Dean McDonald, Member of the Bills and Overtures Committee
Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyter
Rev. Blair Moorhead, Commission on Preparation for Ministry Chair
Rev. Juli Wilson-Black, Commission on Ministry Co-Chair

*This document, the Packet, contains the **action items** for the Stated Meeting.
Please refer to the additional reports posted on the NCP web site
for important information about the work of our officers and committees.*

OMNIBUS MOTION FOR THE JANUARY 23, 2025, PRESBYTERY MEETING

From the Stated Clerk

- The Stated Clerk recommends the **APPROVAL** of the minutes of the November 19, 2024 NCP meeting.

ACTION ITEMS FOR JANUARY 23, 2025 NCP MEETING

ACTION ITEM #1

Recommendation from the Commission on Ministry

MOTION: The Commission on Ministry, pursuant to Book of Order G-2.0504(c) and the Presbytery's Policy on Changes in Pastoral Roles within a Congregation, recommends that the Presbytery **GRANT** an **EXCEPTION** to allow the Rev. Olivia Patterson, who is currently serving as an Associate Pastor (Stated Supply) at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, to be eligible to be called and installed as Associate Pastor.

NOTE: Approval of this exception requires a three-fourths majority.

Rationale: The Book of Order states that a pastor serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is "ordinarily" not eligible to become the installed pastor (G-2.0504b), but allows the presbytery to grant an exception by a three-quarters vote (G-2.0504c). The NCP Policy on Changes in Pastoral Role provides a process whereby the CTC is able to bring such a recommendation for a minister who has been serving for at least 12 months. In accordance with this policy, Rev. Patterson has communicated her request in writing and met with representatives of the CTC, who have recommended granting the exception.

Olivia Patterson became the Associate Pastor (Stated Supply) for Youth and Young Adults at Westminster in the fall of 2021. Over the past three years, the congregation has come to value her gifts and her leadership. In April 2024, she contacted the CTC to request an exception so that she might become an installed associate pastor at the church. With the agreement of the CTC, the church adapted its staff review process, which includes feedback from the congregation, to meet the needs of the congregational discernment process outlined in the Policy on Changes in Pastoral Role. On December 4, 2024, the co-chairs of CTC received confirmation that this process had been completed, and that the session, having consulted with the congregation, wished to proceed with requesting an exception under G-2.0504(c).

ACTION ITEM #2

Recommendation from the Commission on Ministry

The Coordinating Commission of the Commission on Ministry **MOVES** that the Presbytery Adopt the following Policy for Authorizing Ministers of Other Denominations to Celebrate the Sacraments. (A rationale for the policy is given in Purpose section of the document.)

National Capital Presbytery Policy to Authorize the Celebration of the Sacraments by Ministers of Other Denominations

Purpose

In an Advisory Opinion issued on September 28, 2011, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly offered the following counsel regarding whether ministers of denominations that are not part of the Formula of Agreement may celebrate the sacraments in PCUSA churches:

A presbytery may also offer temporary membership for a minister of another Christian denomination who is serving a validated ministry or installed relationship under the Formula of Agreement when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery's own rule. It has been understood that this preparation includes the proper training for understanding the Sacraments including Baptism and the Lord's Supper. All minister members (temporary or full membership) are able to perform the sacraments. So, it is important that the requirements of preparation are full and include preparation for presiding over the sacraments.

That leaves the question whether Ministers of Word and Sacrament from other Christian denominations who have not been granted temporary membership in a presbytery with the preparation required for temporary membership are allowed to celebrate the Sacraments within Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations or councils. There is no clear Authoritative Interpretation for this question. Since the Formula of Agreement is about those denominations with whom the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in full communion, this office would suggest that Ministers of Word and Sacrament from other Christian denominations than those with whom the Presbyterian Church (U.S. A.) is in full communion would have to be prepared by the presbytery established by rule in order to be authorized by the presbytery to be eligible to then be authorized by a session to administer the Sacraments.

The purpose of this document is to establish a rule whereby National Capital Presbytery might authorize ministers of denominations other than the four parties to the Formula of Agreement to celebrate the sacraments in its churches.

Temporary Membership

Under the *Book of Order*, temporary membership in the presbytery is available to ministers of other denominations who fall into the following two categories (G-2.0506):

1. Ministers serving in installed pastoral relationships under the Formula of Agreement.
2. Ministers serving temporarily in validated ministries in this church.

For the purpose of this policy, the second category will include only ministers serving NCP churches in temporary pastoral relationships. Under NCP's Pastoral Relationships Policy, temporary pastoral relationships include Interim Pastor, Stated Supply Pastor, and Short-Term Supply Pastor. NCP will not validate the ministry of non-PCUSA ministers serving beyond the jurisdiction of the PCUSA.

Other Circumstances

Ministers of denominations with which the PCUSA has entered into ecumenical agreements may, insofar as those agreements allow, celebrate the sacraments when invited to do so by a session that has authorized the celebration.

Ministers of denominations whose celebration of the sacraments is not authorized by ecumenical agreements may seek authorization to do so in the manner described below.

Procedure for Authorizing a Minister of Another Denomination to Celebrate the Sacraments

Ministers seeking temporary membership in NCP shall follow the usual process of examination and reception. Such examination shall address the ministers' understanding of the Sacraments, and the Examination Team shall, when making a recommendation as to membership, offer any recommendations for further preparation it may deem necessary.

In the case of other ministers seeking authorization to celebrate the sacraments, the following process will apply:

1. The minister requests permission through the NCP Stated Clerk, providing evidence of current good standing in a Christian denomination.
2. Either the Stated Clerk or the General Presbyter verifies the minister's membership with the denomination or the appropriate judicatory body.
3. A minister may request authorization to celebrate Baptism only, the Lord's Supper only, or both sacraments.
4. The Stated Clerk refers the minister to the Examination Team of the Commission on Ministry for an examination on the minister's understanding of those sacraments for whose celebration the minister is seeking authorization, guided by W-3.04. The Examination Team may recommend:
 - a. That the minister be authorized to celebrate the sacraments when invited to do so by sessions of NCP churches.
 - b. That the minister be authorized to celebrate the sacraments, after additional preparation to be provided by a minister member of NCP approved by the Coordinating Commission.
 - c. That the minister be denied authorization to celebrate the sacraments at this time. (A recommendation to deny authorization may also include suggestions for further preparation.)
5. The Coordinating Commission of the Commission on Ministry considers and acts upon the Examination Team's recommendation and reports its action to the Presbytery at the next Stated Meeting. The Stated Clerk communicates the action of the Coordinating Commission in writing to the minister.

Preparation

If, in its examination of the minister, the Examination Team determines that additional preparation is necessary before the minister is authorized to celebrate the sacraments, it may identify a minister member of NCP to act as a mentor for this purpose, or it may request that the Coordinating Commission do so. In either case, the mentor shall be approved by the Coordinating Commission. This preparation shall include the theology of the sacraments, the procedures by which particular celebrations of the sacraments are authorized by councils of the church, and the manner of their celebration, as provided in *Book of Order W-3.04*.

ACTION ITEM #3

Recommendation from the Commission on Ministry

MOTION: The Commission on Ministry recommends that the Presbytery **ESTABLISH** an Administrative Commission for Northwood Presbyterian Church in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The Administrative Commission, after consultation with the session and members of the church shall have the power to carry out *all matters related to the dissolution of the church*:

1. Assuming original jurisdiction from the session, in accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0303e**.
2. Pastoral care of the members.
3. An appropriate celebration of the ministry and mission of the congregation.
4. The orderly dismissal of members to other congregations of their choosing.
5. Securing, holding, and using of the properties and finances of the congregation, including the maintenance of property and liability insurance.
6. The making of recommendations to the Presbytery about the sale or disposition of such property.
7. Conveying all original church records (minutes, rolls, and registers) and historically important documents or artifacts to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery for preservation.
8. Dissolving the legal corporation once all property has been transferred or disposed of.

In accordance with **Book of Order G-3.0109(b)**, the Commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings for incorporation into the records of the Presbytery. The Commission shall report its decisions to the Stated Clerk, who shall report them to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting.

The Commission's members shall consist of five persons, divided as equally as possible between Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders. The COM will present nominees for election to the Commission at the Stated Meeting after confirming their availability to serve.

The NCP Moderator shall have the power to fill the remaining vacancies, and to fill any other vacancies that may arise between meetings of the Presbytery, provided that the names of those persons appointed to the Commission are reported at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

Rationale: The *Book of Order* entrusts presbyteries with the work of “organizing, receiving, merging, dismissing, and dissolving congregations in consultation with their members” (G-3.0301a). When a presbytery determines that a congregation is to be dissolved, however, there are a number of practical tasks that are best entrusted to an administrative commission vested with the authority to act on behalf of the presbytery in the areas enumerated above.

In November 2024, the pastor of Northwood Presbyterian Church communicated to the Stated Clerk and the General Presbyter that the session had determined, after an extended period of discernment and exploration of possibilities for redevelopment with the assistance of the Presbytery, that the most faithful course was to request that the Presbytery dissolve the congregation. At a gathering of the congregation organized for this purpose, the session shared its determination and, after hearing from the church’s members, confirmed its request to the Presbytery that the congregation be dissolved.

While the Commission on Ministry brings this recommendation to the Presbytery with the sadness that befits the end of the ministry of a particular church, it commends the people and the elders of Northwood Presbyterian Church for the prayerful, considered process by which they have reached this conclusion. Furthermore, it notes that by exercising initiative in this manner, the congregation is able to conclude its ministry in a way that will include opportunities for thanksgiving, celebration, and collaboration with the Presbytery. We hope that the Administrative Commission’s recommendations concerning the church’s property might serve to establish a durable legacy for the congregation that is faithful to both the mission of the PCUSA and the character of this particular expression of the church. We further hope that the Commission looks to the members of the congregation to help guide this aspect of its work.

ACTION ITEM #4

Recommendation from the Commission on Ministry

MOTION: That National Capital Presbytery ESTABLISH an Administrative Commission for the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale, in accordance with *Book of Order* G-3.0109(b), in response to reports of disorder in the session and the congregation. The Commission shall have the authority to:

1. Visit with the session and the congregation to inquire into and settle the difficulties therein (G-3.0109(b)5, G-3.0303(d)).
2. Exercise the presbytery's powers of administrative review (G-3.0108), including the power to:
 - Review any records of the session not yet submitted for review by the presbytery, determining "whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with [the PCUSA] Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church" (G-3.0108a).
 - Direct the session to take corrective action with respect to any matter it determines to be out of compliance (G-3.0108c).
3. Review the church's employment policies and procedures, making recommendations for action on the part of the session as needed.
4. Review the management and procedures of the Christian Childcare Center, making recommendations for action on the part of the session as needed.
5. Direct the session and the congregation to meet as necessary (G-1.0502, G-3.0203).
6. Assume original jurisdiction, if it determines that the session cannot exercise its authority, following the procedural safeguards in G-3.0303(e).

The commission shall afford to all persons affected by any of its decisions fair notice and an opportunity to be heard on matters at issue before making a decision final.

The commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings and shall submit that record to the council or councils for incorporation into its records. It shall make a report of its decisions to the NCP stated clerk, who shall transmit it to the council at its next stated meeting. NCP may rescind or amend an action of its administrative commission in the same way actions of the council are modified.

The commission shall consist of five (5) members, divided as equally as possible between Ruling and Teaching Elders. At its initial organizing meeting, the commission shall elect a chair from among its members. The following persons are NOMINATED for election to serve on the AC:

- The Rev. Hope Lee (Teaching Elder)

- Elder Ako Cromwell (Ruling Elder, Fairfax Presbyterian Church)

(The COM will present additional nominees at the Stated Meeting after confirming their availability to serve.)

The NCP Moderator shall have the power to fill the remaining vacancies, and to fill any other vacancies that may arise between meetings of the Presbytery, provided that the names of those persons appointed to the Commission are reported at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

Rationale: The *Book of Order* provides a non-exclusive list of functions that may be entrusted to Administrative Commissions created by councils of the church. Among these functions is:

(by presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly) visiting particular councils, congregations, or agencies over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and inquiring into and settling the difficulties therein, except that no commission of a presbytery shall be empowered to dissolve a pastoral relationship without the specific authorization by the designating body (G-2.0901); (G-3.0109(b)5)

In July 2023, the Commission on Ministry (COM) became aware of reports of disorder at First Presbyterian Church of Annandale involving a conflict between the pastor and other staff at the church. In the course of addressing this conflict, the COM became concerned about the session's alleged failure to adopt and follow a policy governing the "the responsibilities of [administrative staff] positions, the method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment" (G-3.0110), as required by the Book of Order, and a consequent lack of prudence and equity on the part of the session as it carried out personnel-related decisions.

In addition, it was alleged that certain members of the church were regularly present in the church's Christian Childcare Center while it was in operation, despite not having submitted to the background check required of staff and volunteers.

On April 12, 2024, an administrative inquiry team formed by the COM requested that the session provide a number of records related to the Christian Childcare Center Director position, as well as copies of the church's personnel and child protection policies. On May 10, the session communicated that it had adopted a new personnel manual (which it did not provide) and declined to provide any of the requested documents.

The Leadership Council of National Capital Presbytery, having been authorized by the Presbytery's Manual of Administrative Operations to decide those matters not specifically reserved to the Presbytery, exercised the Presbytery's power of special administrative review (G-3.0108b) at the request of the COM, directing the session to produce the requested documents and appointing the administrative inquiry team, consisting of the Rev. Nancy Neal, Elder Linda Lanham (OPMH), and Elder Ako Cromwell (Fairfax),

to review the documents and make recommendations for action by the session. The Leadership Council directed the session to produce:

1. The advertisement for the Christian Childcare Center Director position that the church publicized in 2022, and the current or most recent advertisement for the same position.
2. The job description for the same position as it existed in July 2023, and the current job description, if it is different.
3. The employment contract or letter that constituted the agreement between the Director of the Christian Childcare Center and the Christian Childcare Center/FPCA regarding duties, compensation, performance expectations, etc., that was in effect as of July 1, 2023.
4. The termination letter provided to the Director of the Christian Childcare Center in July 2023.
5. Any additional records relating to this Director's employment with FPCA and the Christian Childcare Center.
6. The policies required by the Book of Order related to "the hiring of ... staff, the description of the responsibilities of the positions, the method of performance review, and the manner of termination of employment" (G-3.0110).
7. The church's child and youth protection policy (G-3.0106), including information concerning which persons are required to undergo background checks and receive child sexual abuse prevention training.

This directive was communicated to the session on July 9, 2024, and on August 9, 2024, the NCP stated clerk received a bundle of documents. A cover letter explained that the requested personnel records were being withheld for reasons of confidentiality and conformity with employment law. The administrative review team judged the documents to be responsive to only the last two items enumerated above (#6 and #7). Consequently, it was not able to accomplish the task for which it was appointed by the Leadership Council.

The purpose of forming this administrative commission is to carry out the original purpose of the Commission on Ministry in inquiring into concerns about the adequacy of and adherence to policies related to employment and child protection which are required by the Book of Order. The COM does not wish to overturn or second-guess personnel decisions, but simply to ensure that proper procedures are in place. At this stage, it appears necessary to entrust this work to a body vested with the authority of the Presbytery itself.

ACTION ITEM #5

Recommendation from the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry moves that Rebekah Greniven be allowed to enter the expedited candidate process according to the Book of Order G-2.0610 *“When a Presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodation to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may by three-fourth vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except G-2.0607d (ordination exams).”*

NOTE: Approval of this accommodation requires a three-fourths majority.

The Book of Order requires that the candidacy phase last at least one year (G-2.0602). The expedited process simply removes this time requirement. Rebekah has already completed her Master of Divinity degree from Virginia Theological Seminary, and she has passed the five ordination exams. CPM is recommending that we waive the one-year requirement so that she can be certified ready for ministry within the next year. She is a candidate in good standing with Westminster Presbyterian Church in Alexandria and is under care of the National Capital Presbytery’s Commission on Preparation for Ministry.

ACTION ITEM #6

Recommendation from the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry moves that Diane Maloney be allowed to enter the expedited candidate process according to the Book of Order G-2.0610 *“When a Presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodation to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may by three-fourth vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except G-2.0607d (ordination exams).”*

NOTE: Approval of this accommodation requires a three-fourths majority.

The *Book of Order* requires that the inquiry and candidacy phases together last at least two years, including at least one year as a candidate (G-2.0602). Diane has completed many of the requirements for ordination in her Masters of Arts program at Memphis Seminary. She is currently at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary completing courses including languages and polity, and anticipates graduation before two years of being under care. Because Diane has been serving in ministry for years, we want to make the way clear for her ordination in a timely manner.

ACTION ITEM #7

Recommendation from the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry moves that the Presbytery approve alternate-means ordination exams for Ministry Candidate Nat Amarquaye according to Book of Order G-2.0610.

G-2.0610 Accommodation to Particular Circumstances

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a Presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of a candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination exams. A full account of the reasons for any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

The CPM is seeking approval of the following alternate exams for Candidate Amarquaye:

Exegesis exam: The CPM will identify two readers from outside our presbytery to read Nat's Fall 2024 Exegesis exam. This exam was deemed unsatisfactory because his name was accidentally left as a header on the exam. Nat was denied a reconsideration when we petitioned the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations Executive Committee. And notes from the readers of the exam indicate he may receive a satisfactory assessment without any identifying information present. Therefore we do not want him to have to re-write the exam and are requesting it be re-read instead.

Polity exam: An in-person mock session meeting that presents relevant polity issues requiring knowledge of the Book of Order and pastoral sensitivity.

NOTE: Approval of these alternate-means examinations requires a three-fourths majority.

Rationale: Alternative exams are a way to support individuals for whom the written ordination exams have not been successful. As the PC(USA) Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry states, "This provision recognizes written examinations are not appropriate means by which to assess some individuals' ministry competence" (p. 59). When individuals take the exams multiple times with the same result, it is our goal to support them in finding an alternate way to assess the same knowledge and pastoral readiness.

ACTION ITEM #8

Report of the Bills and Overtures Committee

1. The Bills and Overtures Committee recommends that the Presbytery APPROVE Amendment 24-A.
2. The Bills and Overtures Committee recommends that the Presbytery APPROVE Amendment 24-C.

The text of these amendments, proposed by the General Assembly, can be found below, excerpted from the booklet provided by the Office of the General Assembly:

24-A — F-1.0403

OPENESS TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

F-1.0403 UNITY IN DIVERSITY (POL-01 1)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall F-1.0403 in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity be amended as follows? (Deleted text is in ~~striketrough~~; added text is in *italics*.)

“F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity ...

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, *gender identity, sexual orientation*, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

24-C — G-2.0104b

ORDERED MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

G-2.0104b GIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS (POL-01 2)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0104b be amended as follows:

(Deleted text is in ~~striketrough~~; added text is in *italics*.)

b. Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G-2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.0404), *the Historic Principles of Church Order (F-3.01)*, and in the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403. Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.