



Administrative Commission for Examinations: Topics for Examination Discussion (Summary)

The Donegal Presbytery desires the process of examining ministers and candidates to be collegial rather than inquisitorial. Our hope is that the examination will be an occasion for substantive theological conversation among minister or candidates and the members of the commission that will illumine the faith commitments and theological depth and breadth of those who seek admission to membership in the presbytery. **This is not an examination of the content of the minister or candidate's knowledge, but rather of his or her views.**

Toward that end, the Examinations Commission has prepared the following list of topics about which a minister or candidate seeking admission to the Presbytery of Donegal should be prepared to share theological conversation. This document does not presume to define particular answers as acceptable and others as unacceptable. It is intended to stimulate the thinking of a minister or candidate in preparation for his or her conversation with the commission.

The topics to be covered in the conversation are presented with short introductions in this document. The Presbytery website has a more extensive "Topics" document showing typical questions that might be used.

The examination conversation will proceed generally along the following plan:

- Introduction of minister/candidate and commission members
- Questions for conversation
- Commission discussion (minister/candidate excused temporarily)
- Follow-up questions as needed
- Commission decision and housekeeping matters

Area One: Christian Faith and Spiritual Practice

Spirituality and spiritual disciplines are common subjects in church conversations. What do these mean, and how can they be nurtured? In your life of faith, what does it mean to trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior? How have you seen the movement of God's Spirit in your life?

Area Two: Reformed Theology

What do you think are the unique contributions of the Reformed tradition to Christian life? What is the place of Scripture in the life of faith? What ways of describing the atonement are most meaningful to you? How do you understand "created in the image of God" in the current environment as it relates to gender and sexuality?

Area Three: Sacramental Theology and Practice

As you understand the sacrament, what happens in baptism? How do you understand the language of the “body” and “blood” of Christ in your sacramental theology? What is the relationship between baptism and the Lord’s Supper?

Area Four: Church Polity

In the “Foundations” section of the Book of Order, what are two or three concepts that are important to you and how do they affect your ministry? Presbyterians are known to do things “decently and in order”. How is our polity challenged in the messy world we live in?

Area Five: The Evolving Church

This topic area focuses on the church and its unique role in the 21st century. There have been extraordinary changes in our denomination and the American church in general. Pastoral/congregational expectations have changed radically. The health and welfare of the church of Jesus Christ demands that we address the new realities. How can we do that?

Area Six: Balanced Living

Jesus said that He came so that we may have a full, abundant life. In this topic area, we will explore practices for leading and living a balanced life.