



**PCUSA Ordination Process Support Guide
Advice, Tips, Suggestions and Approved Examples**

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*May my work guide those who struggled like myself.
May we change the world, together.*

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DISCERNMENT/PRE-INQUIRER CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Buy a binder. BIG SIZE. Print this PDF entirely out and put it in the binder: Organize it. Feel good about yourself, *you're so organized.*
- ☐ PRINT THIS SEPARATE MANUAL OUT AS WELL and also put in binder:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AwzyiCA6u6BYiAXHA_02wCUhxtwO2c7b/view?usp=share_link
- ☐ Research Seminaries (PCUSA Seminaries will be easier on process and more affordable vs. divinity programs, it needs to be ATS accredited for our process)
- ☐ Begin conversations with your PCUSA church. Not a member? Join one and let the minister know you are discerning the process.
- ☐ Read this: <https://www.ashleymasonbrown.com/ordination-process-help>
- ☐ Pick 1 of these theologians and read their work (this will help you with interview prep for seminaries /presbyteries : John Calvin, Cindy Rigby, Daniel Migliore, Bonhoeffer, Delores Cannon, Shirley Guthrie.
- ☐ Email Seminary Admissions at 3 Seminary or Divinity Schools and set up visits or phone calls/discovery weekend visits. I would advise applying to 3. There aren't that many but it's good to have options.
- ☐ Throughout the road ahead, keep copies of anything CPM promises you. CPM has volunteers serving 3 year tenures, they rotate on and off. Verbal commitments are often forgotten. Have a WRITTEN record of every promise, every commitment of financial support, every scheduled meeting. Print it off, keep in the binder.
- ☐ Research scholarship opportunities, see some here:<https://www.ashleymasonbrown.com/financial-resources-for-pcusa-seminary-students>
- ☐ If you want to be most prepared: start studying the content of the bible. Know facts/ places/people! Watch Veggie Tales/Bible Project on Youtube.
- ☐ Go back into the Google Drive, and print out the rest of the FORMS, PDFs there, and organize your binder. So you have a physical place to look in case you lose this link:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UIgwkRL51dx7i1nFRN-2Lww69ZFXE7y?usp=share_link

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAM + BACKGROUND CHECKS

Notes: Once you begin the Pre-Inquirer phase, you will go through a Psych Eval. Your Presbytery will tell you the details and who to use. Foothills used an organization out of NC called MDS. I really enjoyed the process despite having nerves about it. You get a copy of your report and it's very educational about your areas of strengths and areas of weakness. Do not hide ANYTHING, they are not looking to condemn or harm.)

You will need to pass a background check. You'll have a significant amount of paperwork for all of these things, fill them out and submit them timely. Don't hide anything.

The Psych Eval can cost \$1000+. Ask your church if they can help cover these costs. If your church is unable, reach out to other churches to see if they have any mission funds to help you!!! The Psych Eval group will send you a TON of paperwork to prep with and submit. Be completely honest and don't hold back in this area. The ONLY people who read this very very very secret information will be the Chair of the CPM and your assigned Moderator, and perhaps the Clerk. This information is VERY Private. One thing the evaluators are checking for is whether you are holding/hiding anything. The more forthcoming you can be, the better.

STATEMENT OF FAITH:

PERSONAL NOTES FOR ORD PROCESS SEEKERS:

This is my final statement after many painful iterations, one even not approved. Do not be yourself. Do not be creative. Do not say what is on your heart. You do all those things- AFTER YOU GET ORDAINED. Here is what you need to know: FORMAT: 500 words, 1 page. CONTENT: Paragraphs on a) triune God, b) Scripture, c) Sacraments, d) Purpose of Church and e) salvation/Christ's return. This is what passed a very challenging CPM that tore me apart. While personally, I do not care if you copy and paste, I know that CPM would not be amenable to that.

You'll need to write your own. Go through recent presbytery packets and review the ones you find there. Have several respected PCUSA ordained ministers read your statement of faith.

Personal Statement of Faith of Ashley Brown

Presbytery of South Louisiana, 2024

I believe in the Holy and Triune God. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of all, who loves His creation and humankind without end. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son, fully human and fully divine, who sacrificed his life and died on the cross for our sins and resurrected three days later. It is in this profound act that we are made right with God. I believe in the Holy Spirit, who is our comforter and advocate, who guides us in faithfulness.

I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments bear witness to the Word of God. John 1:14 tells us that Jesus Christ is the living Word. Luke 11:28, tells us that the Scripture reveals God. I believe that Scripture is the unique and authoritative witness to God and the rule of faith and practice for our Christian living. We are transformed when we live in obedience to the Word of God.

I believe that the Sacraments are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. The sacraments are enacted and seal us in the life of the body of Christ. The sacraments are "*gifts of God for the people of God,*" and serve as Calvin says, as "visible words" that help strengthen faith and nurture discipleship." In baptism, God claims us as beloved children and members of Christ's body, the church, washing us clean from sin. I believe the Lord's Supper is the sign and seal of eating and drinking in

communion with the crucified and risen Lord. I believe that the sacraments are a grace and a gift, freely given.

I believe that the purpose of the Church is to serve as witness to the glory of God through the practice of intentional community worship. I believe that Christ is the head of the community of believers. Through seeking the good news of the Gospel and striving for peace and kindness, we grow in our faith and as stewards of God's promise. In Christ's name, therefore, the Church is sent out to bear witness to the good news of reconciliation with God, with others, and with all creation. In Christ the Church receives its truth, holiness, unity. I believe that the purpose of the Church is to do God's work and live by the example set by Christ.

I believe that the goal of life is to glorify God. I believe in the election of God's people for salvation and service. We are called to serve in faithful response to God's Word. I believe that Christ will come again bringing the new Heaven and Earth. Jesus says we don't know when this will happen, but I hold to the hope of His coming and until that day comes, I gladly rejoice in the beauty of God's creation.

BIBLE CONTENT HELP:

- ☐ sign up: <https://exams.pcusa.org/open/>
- ☐ Buy this: Guide to Bible Basics by Tyler Mayfield (he designed this specifically for PCUSA BCE process)
<https://www.amazon.com/Guide-Bible-Basics-Mayfield/dp/0664263453>
- ☐ Watch “The Chosen”
- ☐ Take practice exam on PCUSA Prep Moodle site but understand that it’s just a prep site, and need to study beyond it
<https://equip.pcusa.org/course/view.php?id=194>
- ☐ Sign up in advance for BCE (usually after first year of seminary)
- ☐ Watch videos and take notes on Bible Project : <https://bibleproject.com/>
- ☐ Allow yourself a few attempts throughout seminary (begin studying 2 months before minimum) it took me 4 times! You can request to take Oral BCE from CPM if you have learning disabilities or as my CPM said.. if you fail this fourth time...)
- ☐ make flashcards (I used Guide to Bible Basics and made cards of any fact i could find/relevant scripture)

ORDINATION EXAMS CHECKLIST:

- ☐ SIGN UP: <https://exams.pcusa.org/open/>
- ☐ Here is a free online resource from Princeton on the ords: <https://ptsem.libguides.com/pcusa-ordination>
- ☐ Great resources from Pittsburgh Sem: <https://guides.pts.edu/PCUSAords/THEOLOGY>
- ☐ GUIDE ON PASSING ORDS: [https://s3.amazonaws.com/library.ptsem.edu-assets/content/documents/Ords\(1\).pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/library.ptsem.edu-assets/content/documents/Ords(1).pdf)
- ☐ **For theology:** MAKE SURE YOU READ AND HAVE GENERAL AWARENESS OF THE BOOK OF CONFESSIONS
- ☐ **For Worship + Sacraments, Polity, Theology** (have Book of Order, Book of Confessions next to you)
- ☐ **For Exegesis:** Refer to several commentaries to build your essays (some should be recently published (as in last 20 years), others can be older)

Final Assessment Interview Questions

☐ PRINT BELOW QUESTIONS OUT, PRACTICE ANSWERING WITHOUT NOTES

Personal Faith and Call to Ministry

- What is your understanding of faith?
- Briefly tell us how your call to become Teaching Elder/Minister has evolved.
- How do you understand your function as a Teaching Elder?
 - o Articulate how this function is reflected in your current role or call.
- How do you take care of your soul?
- How do you take care of yourself physically?
- What regular spiritual practices do you follow? Why?
- In your call, how open are you to be stretched and led by God? What does that look like?
- If you could do anything as a ministry, what would it be?
- When did you first sense God's call on your life?
- What happens when you encounter new interpretations of Scripture?

Suitability of Call

- What is your sense of the goals, visions, and needs of the church or work to which you are being called?
- How do you see your skills, gifts, interests, and abilities considering those goals and needs?
- What areas of professional development and/or continuing education do you think are most important for you in your first few years in this call?
- What are the major qualities you look for in your relationships with members of the congregation and/or your peers on a staff?
- What are your strongest abilities, experiences, and skills which will enable you to be effective in ministry?
- Tell us about yourself: health, maturity and practical judgment, sense of humor, initiative.
- How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?
- How do you "recharge your battery," revitalize your energy level, or find the emphasis for regeneration?
- How, specifically and generally, has the grace of God impacted your life?
- What indications will you look for to determine the effectiveness of your ministry?

- How will you address issues to a congregation that may not hold the same position as you?
- How would you describe your leadership style?

Scripture

- How would you describe the authority of Scripture to a college student?
- How do you interpret (this current event) Scripturally (in this particular context)?
- What do you say when someone says to you: “Scripture contradicts Scripture.”
- Tell us about a Scripture verse or passage which speaks to (specific issue) or how you might use it in an adult class to address (specific issue).
- Do you think original textual language is important in sermon preparation?
- How has using the original language impacted your understanding of Scripture?
- What is your favorite passage of Scripture and why? How have you experienced the truth of its message in your life?
- How do you understand the relationship between the Old and New Testaments?
- Generally speaking, how will you use the totality of Scripture throughout the Christian year?

Theology

- What issues of theological reflection have been demanding your study and thinking recently? Explain some of them.
- In your opinion, what is the foremost theological issue facing the Church today?
- In what ways are the Confessions of our Church important to you?
- How are the Confessions important to the Church?
- How do you define the essential tenets of the Reformed Faith?
- Who is your favorite Theologian and why?
- What does it mean to be Reformed?
- What are the 6 Great Ends of the Church? Which of these resonates most with you and your sense of ministry?
- The following questions deal with the theological content as described in chapter 2 of the Book of Order.

o Trinity – Give us your understanding of the Trinity? How does it affect your practice of ministry?

o Christology – Who is Jesus, as you understand him? Of the many titles the New Testament uses

for Jesus, which of the following (or others) do you find most illuminating and helpful in expressing your understanding of Jesus: Christ, Messiah, Lord, Son of God, Son of Man, High Priest, Lamb of God, Good Shepherd, Way/Truth/Life?

o Incarnation – Give us your understanding of the incarnation? How does it affect your ministry?

o Theological Anthropology – What do you understand the biblical account to mean in the description of human beings as “created in the image of God” (Gen 1:27)?

What does it mean to you that human beings are created “male and female” (Gen 1:27)?

What is the place of sexuality in your understanding of God’s good creation?

o Salvation (faith and grace) – Give us your views on redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

o Atonement – Throughout the history of the Christian faith, there have been many ways of modeling or describing the atoning work of Jesus Christ. What ways of describing the atonement are most meaningful for you, and why?

o Sovereignty of God – How do you reconcile the sovereignty of God with the evil, pain and sorrow in the world?

o Human tendency to idolatry: (Nature of Sin) How do you understand sin?

o Stewardship of all of life – How do you understand our role as stewards?

o Covenantal Ecclesiology: (Christian Church and Community) – When we speak of the Church,

What does it mean to you? How do you understand the ordination vow to peace, unity, and

purity? How do you understand the ordination question around being a colleague in ministry? o Transformation of society – What do you see as the mission of the Church in the world? Talk

about your understanding of the church and its relationship with society. • How would you explain Election to someone from a different tradition?

Sacramental Theology and Practice

- How do you understand the connectional nature of the Presbyterian Church USA from a theological perspective?
- What is your understanding of the Lord’s Supper? What is its significance?
- In what way(s) is God present in the Lord’s Supper?
- Are there circumstances that would warrant withholding communion from a church member?
- How do you prepare children to come to the table?
- Explain to us the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism. Give us your views on Infant Baptism. What do you imagine your practice of Baptism might be.

- o What is the place of the sacraments in worship (in terms of both your theology of worship and the placement in the order of service)?
- o What do you imagine that your practice regarding the participation of elders (and deacons, if appropriate) might be in the administration of the sacraments? Why?
 - Baptism
 - o As you understand the sacrament, what happens in baptism?
- o What scriptural models of baptism (circumcision, ritual cleansing, dying and rising, etc) are most illuminative and meaningful for you?
- o In your ministerial practice, how do you handle requests from relatives to baptize a child whose parents are not members of the church you serve as pastor?
- o How do you handle requests for private baptisms? How do you counsel individuals who come with such requests?
- o How do you respond to a request to rebaptize someone?
 - The Lord's Supper
 - o How do you understand the liturgical language of the "body" and "blood" of Christ, considering your sacramental theology?
 - Why does the PC(USA) recognize only 2 sacraments?
- Polity and Church Constitution**
- What is the difference between a connectional church and a congregational church? What are the strengths of our connectional system?
- What are the vulnerabilities of a connectional church?
- What is it about being a member of this denomination you value?
- How do you understand accountability to the presbytery?
- What is your conception of how the minister should exercise leadership in the congregation and session under Presbyterian polity?
- Describe the Book of Order's portrayal of the working relationship between Presbytery and congregations. Mention the main practical issues which have arisen in your experience of this relationship.
- How do you balance denominational loyalty with personal freedom of conscience?
- In your ministry, how do you seek to carry out our denomination's commitment to inclusiveness and

diversity?

- What does it mean to affirm God alone is the Lord of the conscience? How should this affirmation reflect on controversial issues which divide the church?
- How might your political views inform your ministry? Should they?

Preaching and Proclamation of the Word

- Are there favorite themes to which you return most often in your preaching? What are they? Why are they significant to you?
- What is preaching, as you understand it?
- How do you prepare to preach, including your work with the text, your thinking about the congregation, etc.?
- Is there a role for “the prophet” in preaching?

Final Assessment With Ashley's Answers:

Personal Faith & Call to Ministry

1. What is your understanding of faith?

- Faith Seeking Understanding
- Inquiry yoked to prayer + study
- Calvin says, *"faith is the simple trust and confidence in the benevolence of God extended to us by Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit."*

2. Briefly share how your call to become a Teaching Elder/Minister has evolved.

- Start with Initial Call (growing up/ visiting Cuba)
- Explain how that call changed in seminary.
 - i. Study of Word
 - ii. Practice of Sacraments and learning worship
 - iii. Polity Class – Dr. Hooker
 - iv. CPE- pastoral care
 - v. Montreat Ministry Team
 - vi. SPM at a small church
- Explain how that has changed since Residency at SCAPC
 - o Leading weekly worship with team
 - o Seeing how multi staff operates

- o Sitting in on committee meetings
- o Helping with mission work in community
- o Working with unhoused at Program of Hope
- o Working with college students at Ukirk Site

3. How do you understand your function as a Teaching Elder?

- Articulate how this function is reflected in current role: Serving as an instructor to others in their experience of the Word, Sacraments and Christian life.
- As a Presbyterian core value- focusing on education and ensuring that the congregation receives a certain standard of education in their faith formation, supporting elders and educators to grow as they help teach
- Staying in relationship with the Presbytery, GA, Seminary and colleagues and continuing my own education, supporting the equal opportunity of bible access to all who desire it.

4. How do you take care of your soul?

- Art
- Try to incorporate soul-giving activities into work
- Spending time with friends
- Going to Montreat

5. How do you take care of yourself physically?

- Peloton
- Bike
- Yoga
- Walks with Oakley
- Watch what I eat

6. What regular spiritual practices do you follow? Why?

- Prayer
- Sabbath
- Lectio Divina
- Art + Writing

7. In your call, how open are you to be stretched and led by God? What does that look like?

- I am open to following God's call wherever it leads.

8. If you could do anything as a ministry, what would it be?

- Preach regularly
- Work at a multi staffed church
- I value all ministry but really have enjoyed working at a larger church because of all the people I interact with and learn from
- I would like to work toward being a Head Pastor
- Oversee and implement new life giving programs + initiatives around the arts
- Helping others shine in collaborative ministry

9. When did you first sense God's call on your life?

- Child in Montreat
- Church growing up

10. What happens when you encounter new interpretations of Scripture?

- Wrestle, exegete, journal, discuss, research

Suitability of Call

11. What is your sense of the goals, visions and needs of the church or work to which you are being called?

- Incorporating art + creativity into spiritual care + worship

12. How do you see your skills, gifts, interests, and abilities considering those goals and needs?

- Business/ operations
- Working with people
- Art + Spiritual formation
- Appreciation of beauty + Sabbath

13. What areas of professional development and/or continuing education do you think are most important for you in your first few years in this call?

- Classes on public speaking/ sermon prep/ worship prep
- Working on building a group of pastoral residents- group of colleague, support system of colleagues

14. What are the major qualities you look for in your relationships with members of the congregation and/or your peers on a staff?

- Mutual respect
- Innovation + Creativity
- Responsibility + Stewardship
- High standards + expectations

15. What are your strongest abilities, experiences, and skills which will enable you to be effective in ministry?

- I think my appreciation of art and creative expression are strengths as well as my background in business and my experience balancing books, managing taxes and understanding financial planning. I enjoy working with staff and helping staff members feel empowered.

- I think my appreciation of Scripture and Worship planning also are strong strengths as well as my desire to be present and supportive to those struggling.

16. Tell us about yourself: health, maturity and practical judgment, sense of humor, initiative.

- I am in good health- I feel comfortable with my judgment and maturity and that I am able to manage a sense of humor at many challenging moments but not all.

17. How do you balance your personal/family life with your ministry?

- I use my PTO to stay in relationships with out of town family, and I put my phone on to not disturb (and emails) when I am not working.

18. How do you “recharge your battery”, revitalize your energy level, or find the emphasis for regeneration?

- I hike, yoga, create art, and explore New Orleans with my friends.

19. How, specifically, and generally, has the grace of God impacted your life?

- The most profound experience has been this residency, moments of reconciliation with an estranged family, and witnessing a bunch of prisoners hug one of my congregants at a prison facility where her son was incarcerated.

20. What indications will you look for to determine the effectiveness of your ministry?

- I think the marks of effectiveness are in seeing how people choose to lead and serve in various ways.

21. How will you address issues to a congregation that may not hold the same position as you?

- Mutual Forbearance
- Ensuring space for dialogue

- Creating a culture where disagreeing doesn't mean leaving or walking away, embracing alternative views and making sure the culture is that of belonging. Respectful of various stances.
- Respectful, pulpit not for partisan points but the Gospel of Christ is political, extending grace.

22. How would you describe your leadership style?

- I believe in "leading from behind" – coming from leading children through a parcel of woods in Montreat to the next spot for clubs and letting the kids be up front and myself in the back. The kids took longer to figure out how to get to the next spot, but they stopped and wondered and saw things I would have missed had I been leading focused on the destination. By encouraging their leadership – they grew in confidence and I grew in joy.
- As a teaching elder, it is important that teaching leadership be part of my responsibilities. I want to see the Session + Committee members feel agency to be leaders, and for their views and ideas to be encouraged.
- I love being a leader, even on the bad days. I love the responsibility that comes with leadership, the many personalities I work with, and the opportunity for growth that happens whenever a community forms.

Scripture

23. How would you describe Authority of Scripture to a college student?

- Prayer of illumination before – Holy Spirit helps us interpret scripture. HS makes it a Word at this moment.

“The authority of Scripture derived not from men, but from the Spirit of God.” (*Institutes*, Book 1, Chapter 7, Section 1)
That the authority of Scripture is founded on its being spoken by God.” (*Institutes*, Book 1, Chapter 7, Section 4).

- Scripture should be interpreted with historical and literal sensitivity; yet Scripture's unique witness to the living God resists its imprisonment in the past or its reduction to pious fiction. – Migliore

- Scripture must be interpreted theocentrically; however, the identity of God is radically redescribed in the overarching narrative of Scripture as the Triune God, God of Israel who comes to us in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.- Migliore
- Scripture must be interpreted ecclesially, in the context of life and worship and witness of the church- however an ecclesial reading of Scripture differs not only from an individualistic reading but also from the control of Scripture by church doctrine or hierarchy. What is scripture saying to the community?
- Scripture must be interpreted contextually, however the context of our interpretation must not be confined to our personal history or to that of our immediate locality.
- God's Word cannot be identified with the word of its human witnesses although it is mediated through them- Migliore
- The light of revelation does not descend on us perpendicularly from above; it comes through the worldly media by the power of God's Spirit, who enlists our participation in the process of responsible interpretation and critical appropriation.

24. How do you interpret (this current event) scripturally in (particular context)?

- Look at historical context
- Look at the exegesis of the passage and alternative interpretations
- Review current events, make parallels but be wary of current historical context as well.

25. What do you say when someone says, "Scripture contradicts Scripture."

- Central hermeneutic should be life and legacy of Christ
- Don't get caught up in proof texting/ sound biting scripture
- Passage deserves attention- don't select verses only-
- Multiple Gospels produce a kaleidoscope image that makes up the mystery of Christ

- Commonly said by Atheists who pull pieces of scripture that contradict one another about Sabbath, Women in Church, Seeing God, many subjects.
- There is nuance, historical context and multiple interpretations to consider when reading the Word of God.
- The word of God was written by humans, edited by humans, canonized by humans from oral history finally down to tablet, then down to parchment ... there are going to be passages that are at odds with one another.
- The Holy Spirit helps us wrestle with these passages and to be illuminated by them. But it is not a perfect science, nor is it meant to be- because the hand of humanity was involved, and we are sinful by nature.
-

26. Tell us about a passage or verse that speaks to:

- Death
 - i. Romans 14:8 - For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. Ecclesiastes 12:7 - And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.
- Love
 - i. John 13:34: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
- Sickness

Proverbs 16:24

- i. "Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
- ii. Psalm 34:18 "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

- Marriage

- i. **Ephesians 5:25-29:** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church...

- Baptism

- i. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink— 1st Corinthians 12:13

27. Do you think original textual language is important in sermon preparation?

- Very important to review historical context and alternative interpretations and to review scholarly commentaries.
- Yes in terms of preparation but not always in delivery.
- Slows you down to really immerse yourself in the Word and pay attention to the text.

28. How has using the original language impacted your understanding of Scripture?

- Original Language has multiple interpretations.
- Certain words that don't have a direct one to one meaning-
- These multiple interpretations can change the storyline drastically

29. What is your favorite passage of Scripture and why? How have you experienced the truth of its message in your life?

- I love the simple beginning from John 1; In the beginning was the word, and the Word became flesh. It helps explain the incarnation, and the relationship of God + Christ.

- I find comfort in Psalm 23 for nostalgic purposes- its been read at funerals of many I cared for, or used bedside with the sick during CPE.
- I find comfort in the Book of Esther and her and Mordecai's focus on saving their people against Haman's destruction and jealousy- Esther's story is of bravery and standing up to do the right thing.
- I love Daniel in the Lion's Den and how God sent an angel to keep him company, and of Shadrach, Mesach and Abendigo in the furnace also accompanied by an Angel and survived.
- I find comfort in the parables of Christ, and of Christ's stories of healing- demoniac, the leper, the paralytic man being lowered through the roof by his friends, the walking of Peter on the water and how he faltered, but still was saved.
- The story of Miriam saving her brother Moses, and advocating for her mother to be his wetnurse for Pharaoh's daughter.
- Deborah's leadership in Judges which saved her people

30. How do you understand the relationship between Old & New Testaments?

- OT points to NT, NT reflects life of Messiah + his legacy
- One Testament- One is God's Covenant with Israel, and the second iteration is God's Promise.

31. Generally speaking, how will you use the totality of Scripture throughout the Christian year?

- Preach from the Lectionary/teach from the lectionary – Over 3 year cycle
- Ensure Or + Not represented in service.
- Preaching on OT and having NT as first reaching- make sure the Word professed covers totality of scripture throughout the year.
- At least once a year preach from Gospel, OT, NT, Psalms and Epistles- so that the congregation can experience the fullness of Scripture.

Theology

32. What issues of theological reflection have been demanding your study and thinking recently? Explain...

- Preaching on 2/6 and 2/11 on Transfiguration - **Mark 9:2-9. To Presbytery**
- Trying to wrap my head around Transfiguration is hard enough, preaching on it to seasoned Teaching Elders has pushed me to study additionally. Using John 1 to help place the Word became Flesh into a scripture..
- Jonah calls and Jesus calls the disciples- what does vocation mean when we are called to nineveh.

33. In your opinion, what is the foremost theological issue facing the Church today?

- Foremost- The Church not be the Church- lose focus on our own calling to be the church- return no one evil for evil, carry out Christ's mission.
- The increase of agnosticism in society , loneliness epidemic
- The lack of interest in faith, religious nones,

34. In what ways are the Confessions of our Church important to you?

- Authority of Reformed confessions lies in the truth to which they point
- Relatively bound and relatively free
- Produced over long periods of time, reflection of Holy Spirit at work within the Church and the Church's witness to service
- Articulation of faith of that time period

35. How do you define the essential tenets of the Reformed Faith?

- in Chapter II of the Book of Order yields a constitutionally credible list of essential tenets.
 - i. (1) the Trinity;
 - ii. (2) the incarnation;

- iii. (3) grace alone, faith alone,
- iv. Scripture alone; (4)
- v. the sovereignty of God;
- vi. (5) election; (
- vii. 6) covenantal ecclesiology;
- viii. (7) stewardship; and (
- ix. 8) the necessity to transform societies.

36. Who is your favorite theologian and why?

- John Calvin – Harder to understand, core tenants I agree with. Lift up your hearts- we lift them up to the Lord- gratitude, always be lifting up lives to the Lord.
- Shirley Guthrie – Writes in an easy to understand way. (more modern) Like election, salvation, Christology.

37. What does it mean to be Reformed?

- An emphasis on the sovereignty of God in all things, including salvation.
- An emphasis on the authority of scripture in all of life.
- an emphasis on Christ as Lord of all creation.
- Everyone has a vocation- faith is about the trust in Christ redemptive power – everyone has a god giving call. The church's job is to help people to see that they have a calling. That is when a church is at its best. Central to what it means to be reformed.
- Faith is a verb. It's a gift, but it's also a task. We are given grace but we have a responsibility with that grace.

38. What are the 6 Great Ends of the Church? Which of these resonates most with you and your sense of ministry?

- Proclamation of the Gospel for salvation of humankind – outward looking
- The shelter, nurture, fellowship of the children of God – more insular

- Maintenance of divine worship : *this particular one resonates most with my sense of ministry because worship is the embodying of Christ as we all come together and take the sacraments, read the word and sing praises to God. I love the elegance and beauty exhibited in worship and believe that a truly strong worship experience leads the tone of the rest of the church, Monday-Saturday. Sabbath is important, and worshiping God should always be our foremost priority in all that we do. Glory to God!*

- Preservation of truth – more insular
- Promotion of social righteousness
- Exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world – outward looking

39. The following questions deal with the theological content as described in Chapter 2 of the Book of Order..

- Trinity: Give us your understanding of the Trinity? How does this affect your practice of ministry?

- i. Perichoresis, indwelling,

- ii. Godhead, 3 in 1, Paul's benediction – Paul is very final and clear about the Trinity

- Christology- Who is Jesus, as you understand him? Of the many titles the New Testament uses for Jesus, which of the following (or others) do you find the most illuminating and helpful in expressing your understanding of Jesus: Christ, Messiah, Lord, Son of God, Son of Man, High Priest, Lamb of God, Good Shepherd, Way/Truth/Life?

- i. They all hold the same weight to me, but for others- I've noticed they seem to gravitate to a certain title.

- ii. I think I prefer liturgy to go with Jesus Christ because it's the most obvious and easy to follow for laypersons.

- Incarnation- Give your understanding of the incarnation? How does this affect your ministry?

i. Story how God became Man- Gospel of John- in the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the Word became flesh and dwelled among us.

ii. Great truth that the Word became flesh- Immanuel-
God with us

iii. Great mystery, human nature and divine nature.

iv. Became Human Being to be our savior

v. Conceived by Holy Ghost born of Virgin Mary – who
said, let it be me

vi. Fully God, Fully Man

vii. Word became flesh by the will and word of God. God
Spoke and Mary responded, “Let it be to me according to your word (Luke 1:37).

· Theological Anthropology- What do you understand the biblical account to mean in the description of human beings as “created in the image of God” (Gen 1:27)? What does it mean to you that human beings are created :male /female, (Gen. 1:27) what is the place of sexuality in your understanding of God’s good creation?

i. Sexuality was created by God, but that we must be responsible stewards of our sexuality and expression. Part of God’s good creation- Gift that we are to be a steward of. Romans 8- We are predestined to be conformed to the image of God in Jesus Christ. Our humanity is meant/destined to be conformed to Christ humanity.

ii. Male/Female- tread lightly in your response here-
God is nonbinary, The first two lines in the Hebrew bible use 2 different terms to describe God- one is the masc. Hebrew noun for divinity: the second is the feminine Hebrew noun for Spirit.

iii. Gen 1:26 God speaks of Godself in the plural: Elohim
Let us make human beings in our image to be like us. Infinite multitude of God.

iv. All gender identities are sacred.

v. All human beings/ male and female are made in the image of God. God created all human beings in God's image to be conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

· Salvation (Faith and grace)- give us your views on redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

i. God gave his Son for our salvation, Christ died, descended into hell, and ascended into Heaven on behalf of humans

ii. We are saved by grace and grace alone.

· Atonement- throughout the history of the Christian faith, there have been many ways of modeling or describing the atoning work of Jesus Christ. What ways of describing the atonement are most meaningful to you and why?

i. The incarnation is the beginning of the atonement, when Christ is healing the sick, breaking the loaves, his entire life is a legacy to atonement for all humankind. Atoning for us, not only in his death but also his life.

ii. Christ died for our sins, so that we might know redemption and grace.

iii. Our communion with God is broken by sin, but through grace we are restored.

iv. God became Flesh and sacrificed himself on that cross

· Sovereignty of God- How do you reconcile the sovereignty of God with the evil, pain and sorrow of the world?

i. God takes death unto himself (through the life of Jesus Christ) he experiences all the worst things that humans can do in Jesus Christ, and still loves us. Lamentations- Israel cries out to the Lord. Judges- prodigal son- Nineveh,

ii. God is Lord of Conscience, God knows and sees all, he witnesses our pain and our joys.

iii. Theodicy- why/how can God allow bad things to happen – God does not cause bad things to happen, but God has allowed us to have free will which means freedom to sin. God does not cause sickness but stands with us

through our sicknesses and pains. God sent his Son, Christ to die for our sins, so that we experience salvation. God loves us.

iv. Presbyterians believe the Bible when it says that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)

v. Sin is a condition of the heart or an expression of that condition where we are estranged from God and fail to trust in God. Sin expresses itself in particular act

· Human tendency to idolatry: (Nature of Sin) How do you understand sin?

i. We worship everything (talk about Seculosity) look at your paypal and your calendar and that will show what you devote your time and resources to-

ii. Calvin- the human heart is a factory of idols.

iii. Decisions we make that disconnect us from God

iv. Presbyterians believe God has offered us salvation because of God’s loving nature. It is not a right or a privilege to be earned by being “good enough.” No one of us is good enough on our own — we are all dependent upon God’s goodness and mercy.

· Stewardship of all life- how do you understand our role as stewards?

i. Called to be stewards of that which we receive (bodies, spirits, time, money, Earth, spiritual gifts and fruits of the spirit)

ii. Diff. between steward and an honor (stewards have care of it for a time.. we can only possess what we can give away, everything else possesses us)

iii. To be truly conformed to God is to be self- giving not self- getting.

· Covenantal Ecclesiology: Christian Church + Community- when we speak of the Church what does that mean to you?

i. Capital C- All who profess Christ as Lord + Savior

ii. Ecclesiastic Relationships

- iii. Ecumenicity
 - iv. Grafted into God's promises for Israel
 - v. Other denominations and communions are part of this
- How do you understand the ordination vow to peace, unity, and purity?
 - i. Christ unites all
 - ii. God is not limited by human boundaries and divisions, God works in and through our differences to bring us opportunities to exercise our abilities to forgive, reconcile, liberate and heal and redeem.
 - iii. God sends us out into the world to work toward the day that all things are united in Christ.
 - iv. TE- can lift people's vision toward the hope of God's new creation through preaching, teaching and serving.
 - How do you understand the ordination vow around being a colleague in ministry?
 - i. G.2.0504 says this work (TE) must be done in relationship to RE, Ecumenical partners and members of the church and that we all serve the Church with our own gifts
 - Transformation of Society: What do you see as the mission of the Church in the world? Talk about your understanding of the church and its relationship with society.
 - i. Church is called to serve the world around us
 - ii. Receive the Gift of Gospel of Jesus Christ and to give it to others
- 40. How would you explain Election to someone from a different tradition?**
- God doesn't choose to be God without us- Barth
 - Christ is the fulfillment of God's election to be for us.

- Unconditional election is God's sovereign choosing of his people from before the foundations of the world,
- Romans 8- we are predestined to be conformed to Christ.
- God[s choosing of a people to enjoy the benefits of salvation and to carry out God's purpose to the world.

Sacramental Theology and Practice

41. How do you understand the connectional nature of the Presbyterian Church USA from a theological perspective?

- Royal priesthood (W2.0201) Worship is a collective activity of the people of God, expressing our common life and ministry. As the church, we are the Body of Christ (F-1.0301) – active participation of this whole body with heart, mind, soul and strength should encourage the participation of all.
- Church requires relationships, not meant to be done in solo practice.
- We are the Body of Christ when we are together
- “Where two or three or more gather in my name, there I will be also” Matthew 18:20

42. What is your understanding of the Lord's Supper? What is its significance?

- Sign and seal of our communion with crucified and risen Lord
- Jesus spoke of himself as bread of life, and true vine in whom we are the branches. On the night before his death, Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples.

- Eucharist is thanksgiving to God the Father, Remembrance of Jesus Christ, invocation of the Holy Spirit, communion in the body of Christ and meal of the realm of God.
- Reformed understanding is communion is sign of God's covenant
- Bread of Passover and gift of manna in wilderness link to bread in Lord's Supper as well
- Gift of grace, Lords Supper enacts and seals this gift of grace.
- We prepare ourselves to celebrate Eucharist by putting trust in Christ, confessing sin and seeking reconciliation with God and one another.
- Those who doubt are allowed to come to the table, all are worthy. If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation to baptismal preparation and baptism should be graciously extended.
- Authorized by Session + administered by Word and Sacrament, Session may authorize additional Lords Suppers including Christian marriage, ordination, installation, ministry to the sick, and services of witness to resurrection. At all such events the Word is to be read and proclaimed.

43. In what way (ways) is God present at Lord's Supper?

- Body of Christ (church- people, where 2 or more are gathered in my name) Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there..." "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them"
- Around the table that Christ prepares
- Christ is the bread of life, (John 6:35)
- I am the vine, you are the branches (John 15:5)
- We're never without God, it's a way that the community celebrates and participates in God's presence

44. Are there circumstances that would warrant withholding communion from a church member?

- The host welcomes all who accept the invitation to the Table. (PMA)
- Jesus says come to the table all who are weary

45. How do you prepare children to come to the table?

- Some churches might offer church communion class for children
- *Teaching around the sanctuary's communion table is not necessary but would be wonderful if possible. Regardless, take the children in to see the communion table in your worship space or have pictures of the church's communion table for them to see. Designate*
- *a table in your teaching space to represent the communion table. Treat the table with the same respect you would the actual communion table. Place the chalice and plate on the table for each session. Gather children around the table for teaching discussions.*
- Read to the children Luke 14:15-24
- Help children understand what communion is- that it's a sign and seal of God's grace

46. Explain to us the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism. Give us your views on Infant Baptism. What do you imagine your practice of Baptism might be?

- The Holy Spirit unites us to Christ in baptism
- Pray for the Holy Spirit-
- Infant Baptism: We believe it's biblical, in OT and NT God makes signs of his covenant with us, promising to protect and love us. (Abraham- Genesis 17:7 I will be God to you and to your offspring after you) Sign of covenant is circumcision.
- Jewish tradition follows this promise, the NT the presumption is in favor of OT tradition continuing- we are also told that the promise is to you and to your children. Acts 23:8 and 23:9- Peter speaks of baptism and the promises for children and for yourself and future generations. Whenever the head of household is in covenant with God, everyone in the household receives baptism.
- In him Christ, you were circumcised... (Colossians 2:11 and 2:12)
- Luke 18- Parents bringing infants and children to Jesus- Jesus says do not hinder them for such is the kingdom of God.

- Apostle Paul says children of believing parents are holy and clean- externally holy- they belong to the visible church and part of the people of God hands should be baptized and raised within the covenant.
- Baptism is Sign and seal of our incorporation into Jesus Christ. Marks the beginning of a new life in Christ. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, given with and through Baptism, equip and strengthen us for the challenges of Christian faith and life.
- Bond of unity in Jesus Christ
- Deep reservoir of theological meaning including: dying + rising with Jesus Christ, pardon, cleansing and renewal, the gift of the Holy Spirit, incorporation into the body of Christ, sign of the real of God.
- Water of baptism is linked with waters of creation, flood and exodus.
- Dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11)
 - i. Infant Baptism: All ages can be baptized (only once though), infant baptism has the examination of the parents, instructing them on significance of baptism, enrolling those who are baptized as members of congregation and providing for ongoing nurture and formation for baptismal life in the world. Congregation as a whole on behalf of the universal church is responsible for nurturing baptized persons in Christian life When a young child is presented for Baptism at least one parent should be an active member of a Christian church, normally the congregation in which the baptism takes place.

General Matters

47. What is the place of the sacraments in worship (in terms of both your theology of worship and the placement in order of service?)

- In this community- Lord's Supper is every week at 8:30 Service, and monthly at 10:30 Service- response to the Word- after the sermon.
- Baptism- proceeds the sermon, but we read scripture before. We make sure that the Word proceeds in baptism and Lord's Supper. The Word must remain the central focus.

48. What do you imagine that your practice regarding the participation of elders (and deacons, if appropriate) might be in the administration of the sacraments? Why?

- TE administers sacraments, RE assists with preparation and the process (ie- representing the Session and Body of Church for baptisms, reading baptismal vows to congregation... RE for communion are invited to help read and serve the communion to the congregation alongside TE. Only time a non-TE can serve communion is when a CRE installed to a congregation serves.

Baptism

49. As you understand the Sacrament, what happens in Baptism?

- Sign and Seal of our covenant with Christ
- Incorporation into the Body of Christ
- Beginning of a new life with Christ
- Done in front of a congregation so the community can also participate in your raising as a Christian- and be a part of the celebration

50. What scriptural models of baptism (circumcision, ritual cleansing, dying and rising, etc.) are most illuminative and meaningful for you?

- Circumcision was a prior covenant (started with Abraham- of God promising to be the God of Abraham and his sons and future generations, baptism is a practice given to Christ by John, and then given by Christ to all as a symbol of Christ's love for us and Christ's relationship with us redeeming us of our sins)

51. In your ministerial practice, how do you handle requests from relatives to baptize a child whose parents are not members of the church you serve as pastor?

- ¹ Parents need to be members of the Church and can start that process that day. Parents are head of the household and will be responsible for raising the child as a Christian, they need to also be incorporated into a church. Baptism is a community affair that involves family, church body, session and Ministers to administer it.

52. How do you handle requests for private baptisms? How do you counsel individuals who come with such requests?

- No private baptisms, unless (hospitals, bedside of the dying, prisons) Baptisms are designed to be a community experience, an enveloping of the newly baptized into the Body of Christ, witnessed by the Body of Christ and incorporated into the Body of Christ.
- **Presbyterians celebrate baptism as a communal act of public worship.** In the Middle Ages, baptism came to be an increasingly private, family affair, separated from worship. The Protestant Reformation sought to change that, arguing that the power of baptism did not come from the act itself but from its connection with the promise of God conveyed in Scripture. That's why Presbyterian baptism is always accompanied by the proclamation of the Word in the context of public worship. Luther and Calvin also insisted that baptism be followed by ongoing instruction in the faith, particularly through the study of the Bible and catechisms.
- Infant baptism expresses that it is God who chooses us for faith, discipleship, and salvation; without God, we have no power to claim these things for ourselves. However, we affirm that people come to faith at different stages in life, and recognize the baptism of older believers as an equally valid expression of the sacrament.
- While pouring or sprinkling water upon the head is most common, Presbyterians also allow for baptism by immersion. Whatever the method, the deep significance of baptism demands a visible and generous use of water, conveying the lavish outpouring of God's grace, filling believers with the gifts of the Spirit, and overflowing in lives of faithfulness, service, and love.
- A teaching elder—a pastor—must preside at the baptism, but it is a congregation's session (or ruling council) that authorizes baptisms and provides for the spiritual growth and nurture of members. That's why a ruling elder of the church always presents the candidate for baptism. In turn, both the family and the congregation promise to contribute to the baptized person's Christian formation.

53. How do you respond to a request to rebaptize someone?

- Baptism is done only once in a life; however we can do a Reaffirmation of Baptism

Lord's Supper

54. How do you understand the liturgical language of the “body” and “blood” of Christ, considering your sacramental theology?

55. Why does the PCUSA recognize only 2 sacraments?

- **W-1.0106: Word and Sacrament** In Christian worship Jesus Christ is truly present and active among us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Wherever the Scriptures are read and proclaimed and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are celebrated, the Church bears witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word, and proclaims the mystery of faith. Through these means of grace, God imparts and sustains our faith, orders our common life, and transforms the world. Through these same acts of worship, we share in the life of the Spirit, are united to Jesus Christ, and give glory to God
- Lord's Supper + Baptism are gifts given to us directly from Jesus Christ
- W.3.0401- Reformed tradition recognizes Holy Communion + Eucharist as having been instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ through the witness of the Scriptures and sustained through the history of the universal church.

Polity & Church Constitution

56. What is the difference between a connectional church and a congregational church? What are the strengths of our connectional system?

- “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). In a manner reminiscent of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus calls his disciples “salt” and “the light of the world,” Jesus tells his disciples in John's Gospel quite simply who they are.

Jesus does not say, “You ought to be branches! You ought to get connected to me!” But, “You *are* the branches.” Our life together flows from God for the sake of others.

- Connectional means greater accountability (checks and balances)
- Congregational means a congregation rules itself (think most Baptist, evangelicals.. nondenoms) – no checks and balances outside of the congregational (ruled entirely unto itself)
- Connectional church- catholicity of the Church though our polity- BOO.

57. What are the vulnerabilities of a connectional church?

- Individual needs of a congregation may be misaligned with connectional church and cause for fracture and splitting. PCA/PCUSA example/ ECO.
- Having to get approvals/ decently and in order works at different time frames.

58. What is it about being a member of this denomination that you value?

- The balance between tradition and openness, I love our traditions (creeds/confessions/ Reformed history/ what reformed theology is/ commitment to education, commitment to mission of the church to the world)

59. How do you understand accountability to the presbytery?

- Checks and balances, relationship required for COM, must serve the greater Church and follow polity.

60. What is your conception of how the minister should exercise leadership in the congregation and session under Presbyterian polity?

61. What is your conception of how the minister should exercise leadership in the congregation and session under Presbyterian polity?

- Parliamentary Procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, following PCUSA BOO polity is vital. Helps keep meetings in line and on agenda.
- TE becomes Moderator of Session meetings reverts back to te upon conclusion of Session Meeting.
- TE is leader, but Session holds equal leadership responsibility.

- TE responsible for Word + Sacrament and the teaching of these two principles, Session holds divided responsibility to running committees, building, finance, stewardship, mission, property, worship, etc.

62. Describe the Book of Order's portrayal of the working relationship between Presbytery and congregations. Mention the main practical issues which have arisen in your experience of this relationship.

- Presbytery exists to support Churches and their witness
- And the churches gather together to support one another at presbytery

63. How do you balance denominational loyalty with personal freedom of conscience?

- God is Lord of the conscience. I balance these things through my own additional study of scripture, study of creed and study of the Book of Order and typically rest in the practice of mutual forbearance in times of disagreement.

64. In your ministry, how do you seek to carry out our denomination's commitment to inclusiveness and diversity?

- Through how I spend my time- making sure I go to areas that are lesser served as part of my responsibilities, working to ensure that congregation is given educational opportunities to grow and stretch their hearts, being seen publicly affirming, listening to, valuing, breaking bread, socializing, worshiping with people who hold different values and who are from different religions and races. Giving speaking opportunities to these people.
- Calling on people who experience those gifts to serve that church- make sure they are seen and participate in leadership

65. What does it mean to affirm God alone is the Lord of the Conscience? How should this affirmation reflect on controversial issues which divide the church?

- That God alone is Lord of conscience, and hath left it free from doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship
- Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable: we do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security and at the same time be equal and common to all others.

66. How might your political views inform your ministry? Should they?

- I think they should be in dialogue with the ministry, but that we must be equally curious about all views of politics and seek to be inclusive and welcoming of all political views. We are called to be One Church (F-2.0201), governed by presbyters, and gathered in councils.
- Pulpit is not a space for partisanship
- Social Gospel of Jesus is political
- Faith should form and question your politics. Faith and politics should never be comfortable- if it is you might be doing it wrong.

Preaching & Proclamation of the Word

67. Are there favorite themes to which you return most often in your preaching? What are they? Why are they significant to you?

- I seem to return frequently to a theme of overcoming challenges to find purpose and using lived experience as a way to mentor others who are struggling in challenges you once faced and overcame. I think it's significant from personal experience, but also from experience of witnessing in my ministry folks overcoming hardship and living out their service to Christ vocationally afterward. Ie- alcoholics to AA leaders, From poverty to self-employed single parent, from prison to working for non profit advocating for rights of the imprisoned.

68. What is preaching as you understand it?

- Speaking about the Word of God (contextual, pointing to life of Christ, passage as a whole). Being responsible with how the pulpit is used- (not partisan) focus on the Gospel and the life of Christ and for OT texts, keep in mind how the OT prepares the way for the Life of Christ.

69. How do you prepare to preach, including your work with the text, your thinking about the congregation, etc?

- Exegete your text
- Exegete your congregation

- I always think first about the congregation and their needs but maybe I shouldn't so much...because I can't possibly know their needs
- But then I take the text and exegete it, research commentaries
- I then write a first draft
- I then go back and rewrite it
- Then I make notecards (6 or so max) with the key points
- Then I practice preaching off of the notecards
- After I deliver a sermon the next day I review the tape and look for areas where I can improve – diction/ projection/ tone/ enunciation/ storyline etc.

70. Is there a role for “the prophet” in preaching?

- I think that each of us are prophets. – prophetic ministry
- I experience this call as one that requires myself and my colleagues and all in the body of christ to be in relationship with one another, and to listen to how God uses each of us to express love and kindness
- Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield listed some qualities of biblical prophets:
- They are grounded in their relationship with God
- They're in proximity with the people for whom they prophecy
- They're often reticent to speak
- They're willing to sacrifice their own good or goods for the sake of God's higher good
- They ache for reconciliation between God and God's people, and among God's people — Jews and non-Jews alike
- It costs them something. “They don't post on Facebook and feel good about themselves,” said Duffield, the senior pastor at [First Presbyterian Church](#) in Greensboro, North Carolina. “It costs them something within their own tribe.”