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TIMOTHY FELLOWSHIP: PASTOR DEVELOPMENT & ORDINATION¹

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¹ Adapted from the ["Ordination Guide for Sovereign Grace Churches" found online here](#)

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this guide is to assist you in the pastoral development and ordination process by providing information and materials. Our constitution describes this process at a high level:

§5.6 Election/Appointment of Elders. *The Board of Elders will select men from among the Covenant Members to enter into a period of training and evaluation under the supervision of the Elders. After selection and acceptance, the Elders will announce to the Covenant Members the men entering into the training and evaluation period. After this period, the Elders shall, by unanimous vote, select from these men those nominees the Elders believe to be qualified to be an Elder. The names of the qualified nominees for service as Elder shall be presented by the Elders to the Covenant Members at a regularly scheduled and noticed meeting of the Covenant Members, provided that a nominee shall not be voted upon at the same meeting at which he was nominated. Any Covenant Member with reason to believe that a nominee is unqualified to serve as an Elder should express such concern to the Board of Elders. Covenant Members intending to speak in opposition to a nominee should express his or her objection to the Elders, as far in advance as possible before the meeting of the Covenant Members at which a vote of the affirmation of the nominee is to occur. Elders will be approved by a vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the votes cast at a meeting of the Covenant Members.*

This document provides a more detailed plan as to how we will go about training and evaluating men for the office of elder, which would potentially culminate in a pastoral candidate being approved by our members and ordained to the office. Included below is an overview of the process, evaluation forms, assignments, recommended study resources, and more.

The ordination process is valuable not only for the evaluation it provides but also for the edification and equipping the candidate experiences. It also functions as a reminder of Christ's love for his Church. The one who gave up his life in love for the Church has ascended to Heaven. From that position of authority, and motivated by the same love, he now gives gifted men as pastors to a local church. May Westview be built up and the glory of Christ be promoted through the appointment of faithful shepherds.

RATIONALE FOR ORDINATION STANDARDS

God's Word presents the role of a pastor as a high calling and privilege. There is a unique authority and responsibility entrusted to Christ's under-shepherds. Every pastor is to be able to teach Scripture publicly or privately. Every pastor is also responsible to help provide oversight in the affairs of the church, a spiritual overseer, a guardian of sound doctrine, and a refuter of false doctrine.

Therefore, to be ordained as a pastor, a candidate must be a proven student of God's Word, "rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). The candidate must be "able to teach" (1 Tim 3:2). "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9). He must be able to protect the flock from false doctrine and from wolves (Acts 20:28-30).

The ordination process for Westview is intended to protect the integrity of our doctrinal commitments and values, to guard against being hasty in the laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22), and to ensure that called and qualified men are preaching, teaching, exhorting, counseling, training, and carrying out all the functions of pastors. The theological maturity and biblical fidelity of our pastors is fundamental to the health of our church.

For this reason, there must be ordination standards that accurately assess a man's knowledge and handling of Scripture, his ability to understand and apply sound doctrine, and his moral qualifications and manner of life. There must be doctrinal standards for eldership that are higher than what is required of church members (Jas 3:1). There should be a process of careful study, preparation, and examination. Candidates should be assessed for their ability to bring God's Word to bear on a range of theological, pastoral, and contemporary issues. The examination should also cover our *Elder Affirmation of Faith* and our shared values.

SUMMARY OF THE ORDINATION PROCESS

1. **Identify a Qualified Candidate:** The responsibility for identifying and training elder candidates rests on our pastoral team (see 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:7-9 for the qualifications; also 2 Tim 2:2 for the responsibility to identify potential elders). The section "[Initial Evaluation Questions](#)" below helps guide us to identify and evaluate potential elders. Any potential reservations or disagreements with the *Elder Affirmation of Faith* must be identified at this point. Members can recommend a candidate or express his own aspiration, but the pastoral team will invite men into this process.

2. **Training & Evaluation:** Church members must be given an opportunity to submit observations, affirmation, or critique of an aspiring pastor. This is why our constitution stipulates elder candidates entering a period of training and evaluation be communicated. Intentional, informal interaction with the congregation is vital for the congregation to assist the pastors in evaluating the suitability of a candidate.

- a. *Complete an Ordination Study Period:* The length of time required for this will vary. The goal is to use the recommended resources list as needed to help each man best prepare for both the written and oral exams, and to write his ordination papers. The length of time will vary depending on the candidate's background, ability, and prior theological training.
- b. *Submit the Required Documents:* As the candidate's study period ends and documents completed, plans will be set for taking the ordination exams.

3. **Pass the Ordination Exams:**

- a. The Bible knowledge exam is an online exam consisting of multiple choice and fill in the blank questions with a 3-hour time limit. If a candidate fails the exam, he will be informed only of his overall score, and not be informed of which questions were right and wrong. Failing the exam requires waiting at least a month and taking the same exam again. The number of times a candidate may take the exam is up to the discretion of the pastoral team. A score of 75% or higher is required to pass.

- b. The theology exam will also be supplied to the candidate. It is a two-part written exam, taken online, and covers the essential content of our *Elder Affirmation of Faith*. Each exam covers roughly half of the *Elder Affirmation of Faith*, and the candidate may study for and write each exam separately. The normal time limit for each part of the exam is 4 hours; however, the pastoral team may provide extra time, or separate the exams into more than two, 14 question exams, in certain special cases (e.g., a non-native English speaker, or a person with a learning or physical disability). No alteration of the exam itself may be made. One of the pastors will grade each part of the exam within two weeks of receiving it and will inform the candidate of his score. A score of 75% or higher is required to pass.

If a candidate fails either part of the exam, he will be informed only of his overall score, and which of the thirteen numbered main headings of the *Elder Affirmation of Faith* requires further study. Failing either part of the exam requires waiting at least a month before retaking the exam, which will cover similar content albeit through a different sampling of questions from the online question bank. The number of times a candidate may take the exam is up to the discretion of the pastoral team.

- c. The oral exam is administered by the pastoral team and may include pastors from other like-minded churches, particularly for staff pastors. The oral exam focuses on 1) personal background, calling, and convictions; 2) polity and Westview's shared vision and essentials, and 3) pastoral ministry. During the exam, the candidate may be questioned on his written exam, ordination papers, evaluations, or Bible knowledge.

4. Congregational Affirmation: Following the completion of all exams, the pastoral team must unanimously agree to formally nominate the candidate as a pastoral nominee to the members of Westview. A nominee shall not be voted upon at the same members meeting at which he was nominated. Any Covenant Member with reason to believe that a nominee is unqualified to serve as an elder should express such concern to the pastoral team. Covenant Members intending to speak in opposition to a nominee should express his or her objection to the pastors as far in advance as possible before the meeting of the Covenant Members at which a vote of the affirmation of the nominee is to occur. Elders will be approved by a vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the votes cast at a meeting of the Covenant Members.

5. **Schedule an Ordination Service.** After these requirements are met, the local church publicly announces a date for an official ordination service, which may be part of a regular public worship service. In that service, the candidate and congregation publicly affirm a series of vows. Then the pastors lay hands on the candidate and publicly commend him to God through prayer.

REQUIRED ORDINATION DOCUMENTS

The following documents must be submitted as an ordination packet to the pastoral team 60 days prior to the candidate's oral exam. The candidate will provide the pastors with all of the following items except #3-4, which will be proctored by the pastoral team.

1. Questionnaires from the pastoral candidate & his wife.
2. Statement of any reservations or disagreements the candidate may have with the *Elder Affirmation of Faith*.
3. Bible knowledge exam
4. Theology exam
5. [Ordination papers](#) (250-750 words each):
 - a. Soteriology
 - b. Pneumatology
 - c. Expository preaching
 - d. Complementarianism
 - e. Sexual ethics
 - f. Mission of the church
 - g. Sermon manuscript and audio/video recording of the sermon

INITIAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The following sets of questions are for use by the candidate and the pastoral team for the initial vetting. The purpose is to help a man think through his strengths and weaknesses, and to give the elders a comprehensive evaluation. But remember: we all stumble in many ways! The goal here is not the documentation of perfection but an honest assessment of where God is at work and where growth is needed. Be honest, be open, and remember: only the chief Shepherd receives a perfect grade!

Self-Evaluation Questions

Each pastoral candidate should provide written answers to the following questions and [complete this questionnaire](#).

Personal — For questions 1-9, answer yes or no. If the answer is yes, please provide an explanation.

1. Are there any current battles with sin that, in your opinion, would potentially prevent you from being an elder?
2. Are there any previous sins or situations that, in your opinion, if they were to become known would prevent you from being able to continue as an elder?
3. Do you have a current parenting situation that we should be concerned about?
4. Were you previously married?
5. Are there any specific marriage conflicts or struggles that we should be concerned about?
6. Have you been convicted of a crime other than minor traffic citations?
7. Have you been accused of a crime involving a child?
8. Have you ever declared bankruptcy?
9. Would another church be offended, have objections, or have any concerns and/or questions if they heard that you were to be an elder in our church?

Ministry

1. What is your ministry experience?
2. What formal training have you had, including any degrees earned?
3. Do you desire to be an elder provided the evaluation process goes well?
4. Are you willing to walk through this process with an open attitude, trusting the Lord with the final result, knowing working through the process does not guarantee that you will be called as a pastor?

Pastoral Team Evaluation Questions — These will be completed by the pastoral team and function primarily as a commendation from the pastors to begin the training and evaluation phase.

- Desire for Pastoral Ministry: "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." (1 Tim 3:1). The goal here is to assess whether the man feels a personal sense of calling and whether others can also attest to that calling. However, the role itself is demanding enough that a man must have a strong sense of calling and desire.
 - Has a desire to be an elder (1 Tim 3:1)
 - Has a personal sense of calling
 - Spouse also confirms this sense of calling
 - Other leaders—family, friends, Community/Discipleship Groups, pastors, etc.—affirm this sense of calling
- Personal Character, "Above Reproach" (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The goal here is to assess the man's character. There are specific areas of character mentioned in the pastoral texts, but the New Testament gives us other areas that should also be included in the evaluation (e.g., Matt 22:36ff.). Moreover, since pastors are to be examples to their congregations (1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:3), there is particular application to them of the full range of Christian virtues. As with all areas, the requirement is not perfection, but there should be clear evidence that the man possesses exemplary character.
 - Spirituality: An evident love of God demonstrated by a spiritual mindset, spiritual disciplines, and passion in worship (Matt 22:36ff.)
 - Prayer/Spiritual Disciplines: Has a long track-record of regular prayer and personal Bible reading.
 - Hospitality: Committed to fellowship and consistent with hospitality (sharing his life and resources with others)

- Humility: Sees need for input and then asks for it and acts on it; receives correction well; confesses sin regularly; postures himself as a learner, a student; not controlled by selfish-ambition and a "title" (1 Peter 5:5-6; Prov 28:13)
- Servant: Demonstrates a servant's heart (Matt 20:25-26)
- Life: Diligently watches his life and teaching and demonstrates growth in both (1 Tim 4:12-16)
- Sexual purity: Does not use pornography, has been faithful to his wife, and relates to the opposite sex in a godly manner (1 Tim 3:2-3, 5:2)
- Self-control: Time, physical health, finances, personal habits, and other miscellaneous areas all demonstrate self-control
- Gentleness: Able to be gentle and self-controlled in conflict (1 Tim 3:3; 2 Tim 2:24-25; Titus 1:7)
- Love: Proactive with people, takes interest in others, listens and converses well, not aloof or preoccupied or unable to relate (Phil 2:1-4; 1 Cor 13; etc.)
- Marriage (Eph 5:25ff.; 1 Tim 3:2, 4; 1 Peter 3:7). The goal here is to assess the man's marriage. There should be unity, affection, understanding, love, and the fruit of godly leadership. How long the man has been married, the spiritual journey of the husband and wife, and other factors will be weighed.
 - Faithful to his wife for their entire marriage
 - Does not use pornography or given to other areas of sexual sin
 - Takes initiative in the marriage to build their relationship (e.g., creates time alone for them as a couple, etc.)
 - Wife would testify that the husband both loves her affectionately and leads her well
 - Husband takes initiative in spiritual matters in the marriage (e.g., makes decisions for the sake of their spiritual health such as inquiring about her Bible reading and prayer, initiating spiritual conversation, etc.)
 - Wife can testify that the husband honors and cherishes her with his actions and his words—both in public and in private
 - Wife submitted to her husband appropriately—not cowering as a doormat, but complementary as a helpmate
- Parenting (1 Tim 3:4-5; Titus 1:6; Eph 6:4). The goal here is to assess the man as a father. The primary fruit to examine is his children. Their submission to him reveals his godliness and faithfulness as a manager of his home. This is an area that is difficult to assess infallibly

because the heart of the child is a factor along with the father. Yet, the Bible clearly and emphatically holds up our children as part of the evidence of our calling as an elder.

- Children are submitted to his leadership—not in cowering fear, but in a willing sincerity
 - Discipling his children in the fear of the Lord—incorporating formal elements like family Bible reading and informal elements like spontaneous conversations and situational guidance/counseling
 - Children are submitted to the spiritual direction of the father—attending the church where he attends, complying with the spiritual initiatives of the father, even if they are not regenerate
 - Does not lead in anger but with self-control and humility
 - Faithful to discipline his children in age-appropriate and situation-appropriate ways
 - Manages his home well generally—caring for his family's financial health, stewarding well their physical property, family schedule is under control; a general appearance of wise leadership in all domestic matters
- "Able to teach" (1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 2:15; Titus 1:9). The goal here is to assess the candidate's basic teaching ability. It is assumed that he will be evaluated based on his Sunday preaching, teaching, or exhorting ability, yet we also understand that different elders will be called upon to teach in a variety of settings. Some will not teach at all on Sundays, some in a mix of venues, some exclusively on Sundays. Although certain qualities that point to an authentic spiritual gift should be present, there is a wide range of gifting that constitutes being "able to teach."
 - Demonstrates the ability to clearly communicate the truth of God's Word
 - Able to exegete a text of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments
 - Able to apply the truth from God's Word to the lives of those in his church
 - The power of the Spirit is evident (i.e., there is apparent unction and effect when he preaches; he preaches sermons, does not give lectures)
 - A track-record of consistent study (recognizing we all differ greatly in our particular interests and energy in our studies)
 - Broad grasp of the Bible, systematic theology, biblical theology, and church history (see below for more on the ordination exams)
 - "Overseer" (Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 3:5; 5:17). The goal here is to assess the leadership of the candidate. Different roles in a church require different levels of leadership gifting,

but since leadership is inherent to the task of being an elder (Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 3:5; 5:17), this gifting must be present in some measure.

- Able to create and execute a plan for ministry
 - Able to follow-through on a ministry plan
 - Able to organize people—defining their tasks, communicating the vision, building a team
 - Able to communicate clearly in general matters (typical conversation, informal advice, etc.)
 - Has a track-record of discipleship and building into others, especially those on his team
 - Makes good decisions about groups of people—identifying the needs, creating a way to meet those needs, anticipating the impact of decisions
 - Able to manage tasks well
 - Able to both lead a team of people and be a contributing member of a team
 - Able to steward resources: thinking through the budget of the church with some amount of wisdom and skill
- "Shepherd": "Shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28, NASB; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The goal here is to assess the candidate's ability to shepherd the sheep God might entrust to him. The role of a shepherd is a combination of anticipating and meeting needs, leading, protecting, and possessing a sincere concern for God's sheep. All must be present for an elder to serve well.
 - Cares for people (carries them on his heart and expresses that personally)
 - Can relate to a broad spectrum of people
 - Ministers to encourage, edify, and serve, not to domineer or control.
 - Does not manipulate to win the loyalties of people
 - Ministers for the sake of others, not personal ambition or reputation
 - Able to counsel those who are struggling with wisdom from the Bible
 - Able to help others grow by incorporating the truth of the Bible
 - Able to identify the needs of a particular sheep and the whole flock
 - Able to see the dangers for a particular sheep
 - Able to see the dangers inside and outside the church that could hurt the sheep entrusted to him
 - Fulfills his role as shepherd with an awareness that he is merely an under-shepherd who is serving the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4)

- Doctrine: "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9). The goal here is to assess the general knowledge of the candidate. To teach and defend sound doctrine requires a broad knowledge of the Bible, theology, and church history. A candidate does not need a PhD in theology to be ordained, but he does need to be able to function well in the common tasks of pastoral ministry, which have at their root the truth of God's Word. These include counseling, teaching, evangelizing, and the defense of the faith that happens on such occasions. As with teaching (see above), there is a spectrum of abilities and giftings that would constitute meeting the requirement here.
 - Has a good grasp of the Old and New Testaments.
 - Has a good knowledge of the key moments of church history
 - Understands and is in full agreement with the *Elder Affirmation of Faith*
 - Has a good command of systematic theology
 - Any reservations or disagreements with the *Elder Affirmation of Faith* have been identified, explored, and determined to be acceptable.

REQUIRED READING

[See the suggested schedule here](#)

- BIBLE (in order of priority)
 - *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, Jason DeRouchie, ch. 1
 - *An Introduction to the New Testament*, D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo, ch. 1
 - "Biblical History" (pp.43-51) in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy
 - "Biblical Theology" (pp. 3-11) in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy
 - "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology" (pp. 89-104) in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy
 - *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Tremper Longman and Raymond Dillard, ch. 1
 - From the *ESV Study Bible*:
 - "The Theology of the Old Testament," pp. 29-31
 - "Introduction to the Pentateuch," pp. 35-37
 - "Introduction to the Historical Books," pp. 385-387
 - "Introduction to the Poetic and Wisdom Literature," pp. 865-868
 - "Introduction to the Prophetic Books," pp. 1229-1232
 - "The Theology of the New Testament," pp. 1803-1805
 - "Reading the Gospels and Acts," pp. 1811-1813
 - "Reading the Epistles," pp. 2147-2149
 - Introductions to individual books of the Bible
- HEAD
 - Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*
 - Jim Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology?*
 - Mark Knoll, *Turning Points*
 - Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame*
- HEART
 - Paul Tripp & Tim Lane, *How People Change*
 - Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
 - David Powlison, *Seeing With New Eyes*
- HANDS
 - Jeramie Rinne, *Church Elders*
 - Harold Sankbeil, *The Care of Souls*
 - Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching & Preachers*
 - [Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*]

ORDINATION PAPERS

To help evaluate a candidate's qualifications, the following papers should be written and submitted to the pastors. The paper topics are drawn primarily from our values and priorities as a church. Each paper should be between 750-1000 words, typed, double-spaced, and supported with Scripture. The papers do not need to be thoroughly researched, footnoted, utilizing multiples of sources, etc—the objective is to see the candidate engage with Scripture and highlight how he thinks about each topic and would counsel or teach on it. A written sermon manuscript, and audio or video recording of the sermon, is also required. (Note: this does not necessarily mean a Sunday morning sermon, although that is ideal. The only requirement is that the sermon that is submitted reflect the man's own exegesis and study.)

1. Describe your views on soteriology using the traditional components of the *ordo salutis*.
2. Describe your views on the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the church.
3. What is expositional preaching, and why does it matter in the life of the church?
4. What is your view on the respective roles of men and women? Include how this applies in the church and in the home. Is it appropriate for a woman to address a mixed-gender audience? How about preaching to the entire congregation?
5. Discuss your view of the Bible's position on sexual ethics, briefly addressing the issues of homosexuality, same-sex attraction, transgenderism, and sexual sins in the heart and mind (e.g., lust, pornography). Include in your paper whether terms like "sexual orientation," "gay Christian," or "pronoun hospitality" are helpful categories. Include as well your understanding of the Bible's teaching about divorce and marriage after divorce.
6. What is the mission of the church? Does the local church have any responsibility for the advance of the gospel in other nations? Does it have any responsibility to transform the culture of its own nation? What is your role as a pastor in these areas?
7. Sermon manuscript and audio/video recording of the sermon.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Bible Knowledge Exam Study Guide

The Bible Knowledge exam is an online, 166 question, 3-hour exam. All questions are short-answer or multiple choice in format. This exam will test your general biblical literacy (genre awareness, location of major events in Scripture, main messages of books, general awareness of biblical theology/redemptive history).

Here are 10 sample questions that will give you a feel for the nature of the test:

1. On what day of creation did God create man? a) First b) Fourth c) Sixth d) Seventh
2. Which prophet anointed David as king? a) Isaiah b) Jeremiah c) Samuel d) Hosea
3. When the kingdom divided after King Solomon's reign, which two tribes were part of the southern kingdom? a) Manasseh and Ephraim b) Benjamin and Judah c) Gad and Asher d) Billy and Bob
4. Which section of Genesis focuses on Abraham? a) Chapters 6-9 b) Chapters 12-24 c) Chapters 27-36 d) Chapters 37-50
5. In what book and chapter do the following appear? Both must be correct to receive credit.
 - a. The armor of God
 - b. The words "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" in the OT
 - c. A vision of Christ among the lampstands
 - d. "An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels."
6. Name the person who said or did the following:
 - a. The religious leader to whom Jesus says "You must be born again"?
 - b. Who said "I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish"?
 - c. To whom did God make the promise "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
7. What book of the Bible comes after Ezra?
8. Which prophet said "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

9. Which book of the Bible is best summarized by the following: "The ascended Lord continues his activity of growing his church and saving the lost through the empowering Spirit of God and the unstoppable Word of God"?
10. In which covenant does God promise to preserve his creation and say he will never again curse the ground because of man?

Appendix 2: Theology Exam Study Guide

The Theology Exam is a written exam that focuses on explaining and/or defending the *Elder Affirmation of Faith* from the Scriptures. All questions are derived from categories and doctrines in the *Elder Affirmation of Faith*.

The exam is a two-part written exam that must be taken online. Part 1 covers material from "Scripture" through "The Saving Work of Christ." Part 2 covers material from "The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit" through "The Spirit of this Affirmation & the Unity of the Church." Each part contains 14 essay questions which the candidate must complete in 4 hours or less, which comes to about 17 minutes per question. Questions do not give equal weight to every section of the *Elder Affirmation of Faith*; some receive more attention than others.

Theology Exam Part 1—14 questions total, 4 hours

- Scripture, the Word of God Written
- The Trinity, One God as Three Persons
- God's Eternal Purpose and Election
- God's Creation of the Universe and Man
- Man's Sin and Fall from Fellowship with God
- Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God
- The Saving Work of Christ

Theology Exam Part 2—14 questions total, 4 hours

- The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit
- The Justifying Act of God
- God's Work in Faith and Sanctification
- Living God's Word by Meditation and Prayer
- Christ's Church and Her Ordinances
- Christ's Commission to Make Disciples of All Nations
- Death, Resurrection, and the Coming of the Lord
- The Spirit of This Affirmation and the Unity of the Church

It is important that you pace yourself; the online exam portal will close when the 4-hour time limit has expired. Answers should be concise and in paragraph form (not in bullet point or outline form) and include sufficient Scriptural support, including chapter references. The candidate is permitted to use an unmarked Bible during both Part 1 and Part 2.

Part 1 must be taken and passed before Part 2, and candidates are not allowed to take both parts at the same time. Study for Part 1 and pass the exam. Then study for Part 2 and pass the exam. The exam below represents the kind of questions that are included on both parts of the Theology Exam.

- The Scriptures
 - Can Scripture ever contradict itself? Include reference to the doctrine of God and the nature and purpose of Scripture in your answer.
 - Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?
 - God is the ultimate Author of Scripture, and thus the trustworthiness of God is the guarantor of the trustworthiness of Scripture.
 - Scripture is not a human document, but a divine revelation; and its purpose is to reveal God's plan of salvation – hence contradictions would imply an inability in God to achieve his purpose through this chosen means.
 - What does it mean to say the canon of Scripture is closed? How do both the closing of the canon, and the authority of Scripture, relate to the gift of New Testament prophecy?
 - Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?
 - Demonstrate awareness of the climactic nature of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension/Pentecost, and the apostolic witness to these events, as marking the close of the canon and the fullness of revelation.
 - Distinction between Scripture as final revelation, and all spiritual gifts (prophecy, tongues, etc.) as under the authority of Scripture.
- The Triune God
 - What does it mean to say that God is transcendent? Include in your answer whether or not the transcendent God can reveal himself to finite human beings.
 - Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?

- Defining transcendence in relation to the Creator-creature distinction, who creates all things and for whom all creation exists. See sections 3.2 and 4.1 and their references to the relationship between God and his creation.
 - The distinction between God's eternity and transcendence, and his ability to reveal himself truly (though not exhaustively) to us.
- God's Sovereign Purposes
 - Does God elect individuals to salvation based on his foreknowledge of their belief? Defend your answer from Scripture.
 - Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?
 - The gracious and free nature of God's election, as explained in section 3.3.
 - Adequate Scripture references
- The Saving Work of Christ
 - Are repentance and faith in Christ a gift from God, or a human work that merits salvation? Give Scriptural support for your answer, and address whether repentance and faith in Christ are necessary for salvation.
 - Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?
 - Repentance and faith are a gift secured by Christ's death for his people. (See section 7.3)
 - If repentance and faith were meritorious, this would contradict Scriptures such as Romans 3:27, 4:5; Galatians 2:16, etc. However, Scripture also makes clear that no one will be saved apart from repentance and faith (e.g., Romans 10:9-11). Repentance and faith are not works, but they are necessary responses to the saving work of God which demonstrate the reality of true regeneration.
- The Church of Christ
 - What are the marks of a true church? In what sense are true churches still imperfect?
 - Answer guide: does your answer address at least the following issues?
 - A true church is characterized by three things: the right preaching of the Word, the right administration of the sacraments, and the right exercise of church discipline

- A true church may contain a mixture of genuine believers and those who think they are believers, but are actually not, despite her best attempts to guard the spiritual integrity of her members
- Even genuine believers stumble in many ways and the congregation as a whole is no different. In a corporate sense, we remain prone to believing what is false (doctrinal error) and doing what is wrong (moral failure)
- The Lord's sanctifying work will not be complete until the wedding supper of the Lamb where he will present the church to himself in spotless radiance

Appendix 3: Study Resources for Theology Exam

In what follows below you will find suggested resources organized by each section heading in the *Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith*. However, remember that your primary resource should be the *Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith* itself! A useful study procedure incorporating the *Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith* and the recommended resources might look something like this:

1. Read the text of the *Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith* for a major section (e.g., “The Scriptures”), looking up each Scripture reference.
2. Assess yourself: are there issues involved in either the *Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith* text that you do not understand? Do you understand the Scriptural references, and the theological terms used?
 - a. If you generally understand the section but want to go deeper on a specific issue, consult one of the Supplemental resources listed below.
 - b. If the Scriptural basis or theological terminology used is very new to you, or if there are still significant issues of confusion after completing steps 1 and 2, then begin with the Foundational resources, reevaluate your understanding, and then consult Supplemental resources as needed.

Our standard reference is Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. The second edition, published in 2020, is the more current resource, and would be the first choice if you are purchasing the book new. However, all chapter references remain the same between the first and second editions, so the recommended chapters will be the same if you already have the first edition and do not wish to purchase another volume. Grudem's chapters are the basic Foundational resource recommended for each section.

As a companion to Grudem, we have also recommended Gregg Allison's *Historical Theology*. This volume is designed to parallel the chapters in Grudem's first edition (though the parallels remain fairly close with Grudem's second edition), and it provides a basic historical survey of the doctrine in question. Knowing the historical context, the range of legitimate theological formulations, and what the church has historically regarded as heretical departures of any given doctrine is always helpful, and in many places will help you understand specific language in the *Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith*.

While Grudem remains our first choice for deeper study, candidates will benefit tremendously from familiarity with other systematic theologians, especially in the Reformed tradition. Hence we have recommended relevant chapters in the works of Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck in our Supplemental reading sections. There are three different Bavinck volumes listed below. Except in cases where maximum breadth of reading is desired, we recommend you choose one volume and use the appropriate sections in that work. The annotations below will help you decide which Bavinck work to choose. (It is worth noting that, as a Reformed theologian, Bavinck's position on baptism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit is markedly different than the *Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith*. Be aware of this difference as you read. We have not included in our recommendations references in his texts that deal explicitly with these topics.)

a. Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* in four volumes is the largest, most comprehensive of his works of systematic theology. The chapters are demanding, but greatly rewarding. Choose this as your source if time is not an issue in your study plan, or if you want greatest exposure to the historical development of the doctrines in question.

b. *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume* manages to significantly reduce the four-volume work, while retaining much of Bavinck's insights. A primary way this reduction takes place is by removing most of the historical theology from the larger four volume series. If time is an issue, or you want clear theological articulation without the historical discussion, choose this volume of Bavinck.

c. *The Wonderful Works of God* is a recently republished (2019) volume (originally entitled *Our Reasonable Faith*) which Bavinck wrote for a broader Christian audience of his day. This means that, in some cases, Bavinck treats a number of doctrines under one larger chapter heading, so the reader looking to go by chapter title alone may have trouble locating the relevant discussion. Choose this volume for a concise, but still masterful, exposition of the Reformed faith.

Beyond Grudem, Allison, and Bavinck, we have recommended selections from what we think to be the best resources on the doctrines in question. Choose as many (or as few) of these as you think necessary in areas you desire further study or need extra reinforcement.

THE SCRIPTURES

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 2-8

- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 2-8
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin, Book 1, chs. 1-7
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol 1: *Prolegomena*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 10, 11, and 13
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, *Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 4-5.
 - *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 7-8.
 - *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, Goldsworthy, "The Canon of Scripture," "Scripture."
 - *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, B.B. Warfield: esp. chs. 1 and 3
 - *Taking God at His Word*, Kevin DeYoung
 - *God Has Spoken*, J.I. Packer
 - *Words of Life*, Timothy Ward

THE TRIUNE GOD

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs. 9-14
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 9-13
- **Supplemental:**
 - "The Apostle's Creed" and "The Nicene Creed" (contained in Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p.1169)
 - *The Holy Trinity*, Robert Letham (chs. 1-3, 17)
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 2: *God and Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 3-6.
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, *Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 9.
 - *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 9-10
 - *Delighting in the Trinity*, Michael Reeves
 - *The Deep Things of God*, Fred Sanders
 - *Doctrine of God*, John Frame, chs. 17-29
 - *The Trinity: An Introduction*, Scott R. Swain

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE & ELECTION

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, ch. 16
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 2
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 2: *God and Creation*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 7.
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, *Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 9.
 - *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin, Book 1, Chs. 16-18; Book 3, Chs. 21-24
 - *The Doctrine of God*, John Frame, ch. 5.
 - *Providence*, John Piper, chs. 2-4
 - *Chosen for Life: The Case for Divine Election*, Sam Storms
 - *Chosen by God*, R.C. Sproul
 - *Chosen in Christ*, Cornelis Venema

GOD'S CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE & MAN

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 21-25

- *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch.15
- **Supplemental:**
 - Note: Because of the wide variety of challenging current issues related to complementarianism and sexual ethics, we have divided these supplemental resources into separate categories. These resources will help you both with preparing for the first Theology Exam, as well as with writing ordination papers #4 and 5.
 - *General Treatments:*
 - *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2: God and Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs.11-12.
 - *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 11.
 - *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 12.
 - *Providence*, John Piper
 - *Created in God's Image*, Anthony Hoekema, chs. 1-6
 - *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy: "Image of God," "Man and Woman," "Marriage."
 - *Complementarianism:*
 - *What's the Difference?*, John Piper
 - *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem
 - *Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth*, Wayne Grudem
 - *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction*, Kevin DeYoung
 - *God's Design for Man and Woman*, Andreas & Margaret Köstenberger
 - *Women in the Church: An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, eds. Köstenberger and Schreiner
 - *Sexual Ethics and Current Issues:*
 - *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*, Robert Gagnon
 - *What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?*, Kevin DeYoung
 - *God and the Transgender Debate*, Andrew Walker
 - *When Harry Became Sally*, Ryan Anderson
 - *Gender Ideology: What Do Christians Need to Know?*, Sharon James

MAN'S SIN AND FALL FROM FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: Ch. 24.
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 16
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, chs.1-4.
 - *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 12-13
 - *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 13
 - *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, edited by Christopher W. Morgan & Robert Peterson: chs. 1 & 4-6.
 - *Created in God's Image*, Anthony Hoekema, chs. 7-9
 - *Not the Way It's Supposed To Be*, Cornelius Plantinga: Ch. 1-7.
 - *What is Evil?*, Scott Christensen: Ch. 3.

JESUS CHRIST, THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 26
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 17
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 3: *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 6
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, *Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 14
 - *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 16
 - "The Chalcedonian Creed" and the "Athanasian Creed" (contained in Grudem, pp. 1169-1170)
 - *God the Son Incarnate*, Stephen Wellum
 - *The Person of Christ: An Introduction*, Stephen Wellum
 - *The Person of Christ*, Donald Macleod

THE SAVING WORK OF CHRIST

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 27-29
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 18-19
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 3: *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 7-8
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, *Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 15-16
 - *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 17-18
 - *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray: Part 1, chapters 1-5
 - "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution," J.I. Packer, in *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, J.I. Packer & Mark Dever, pp. 53-100
 - *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin: Book 2, chs. 12-17
 - *The Cross of Christ*, John Stott (esp. chs. 5-7)
 - *Christ Crucified*, Donald Macleod (esp. chs. 4-11)
 - *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, eds. Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach (esp. chs. 1-4, 6-7, 11)
 - *The Work of Christ*, Robert Letham
 - *Christ Alone: The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior*, Stephen Wellum, chs. 7-8
 - *The Atonement*, Leon Morris

THE SAVING WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 30, 39, 52-53
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 20
- **Supplemental:**
 - *The Holy Spirit*, Sinclair Ferguson: chs. 1-2
 - *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy: "The Holy Spirit," pp. 551-558
 - *He Who Gives Life*, Graham Cole, chs. 2-8
 - *The Holy Spirit*, Gregg Allison & Andreas Kostenberger
 - *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, ed. Wayne Grudem
 - *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, Wayne Grudem
 - *Showing the Spirit*, D.A. Carson

- *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, Max Turner, esp. chs. 10, 15
- *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, Gordon Fee

THE JUSTIFYING ACT OF GOD

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs 32-38, 40
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 22-25
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 3: *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 9
 - *Reformed Dogmatics Vol 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs.1-4
 - *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 17-20
 - *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 20-22
 - *Institutes of Christian Religion*, John Calvin (Book 3)
 - *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray: Part 2, chapters 1-10
 - *Saved by Grace*, Anthony Hoekema
 - "Reformed View," Sinclair Ferguson, in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald Alexander
 - "What is the Gospel?—Revisited," D. A. Carson, in *For the Fame of God's Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper* (pp. 147-70), eds. Sam Storms & Justin Taylor (http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/carson/2010_gospel.pdf)
 - *What is the Gospel?*, Greg Gilbert
 - *Finally Alive*, John Piper
 - *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology*, Robert Letham
 - *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification*, Thomas Schreiner
 - *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine*, J.V. Fesko (chs. 5, 7, 9-12)
 - *Run to Win the Prize*, Thomas Schreiner
 - *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, J.I. Packer
 - *Progressive Covenantalism*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (chs. 2-3)

GOD'S WORK IN FAITH AND SANCTIFICATION | LIVING GOD'S WORD BY MEDITATION AND PRAYER

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, ch. 43
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Holiness*, J.C. Ryle
 - *How Does Sanctification Work?*, David Powlison
 - "Reformed View," Sinclair Ferguson, in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald Alexander
 - *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor
 - *How Long, O Lord*, D.A. Carson
 - *Praying the Bible*, Donald Whitney
 - *Spiritual Disciplines*, Donald Whitney
 - *Habits of Grace*, David Mathis

CHRIST'S CHURCH AND HER ORDINANCES | CHRIST'S COMMISSION TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 44-46, 48-50
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 26, 28-29
- **Supplemental:**
 - Note: because of the large number of doctrinal issues discussed here, the recommendations below are grouped by topic.
 - *General Treatments:*
 - *Reformed Dogmatics Vol 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 5
 - *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 21
 - "The Biblical Theology of the Church," Edmund P. Clowney, in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D.A. Carson
 - "The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Reality," P.T. O'Brien, in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D.A. Carson
 - *What is the Mission of the Church?*, Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert
 - *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*, Mark Dever
 - *The Church*, Edmund Clowney
 - *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*, Gregg R. Allison, chs. 1-6
 - *The Church: An Introduction*, Gregg R. Allison
 - *Church Offices:*
 - *40 Questions About Elders and Deacons*, Benjamin Merkle
 - *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, Alexander Strauch
 - Note also the relevant chapters in, e.g., Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (ch.47); Allison, *Sojourners* (ch. 7); and Allison, *The Church* (ch. 7)
 - *Baptism:*
 - *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy: "Baptism," pp. 395-397
 - *Believer's Baptism*, eds. Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright (see esp. Introduction, chs. 3-4)
 - *Baptism in the New Testament*, G.R. Beasley-Murray
 - *The Lord's Supper:*
 - *The Lord's Supper: Eternal Word in Broken Bread*, Robert Letham
 - *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper*, ed. John Armstrong
 - *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ Until He Comes*, eds. Thomas Schreiner and Matthew Crawford

DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND THE COMING OF THE LORD

- **Foundational:**
 - *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs. 54-57
 - *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 31-33
- **Supplemental:**
 - *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, Herman Bavinck, chs.12-18

- *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 23-25
- *The Wonderful Works of God*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 24
- *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin, Book 3, chs. 18, 25
- *The Bible and the Future*, Anthony Hoekema
- *Christ and the Future*, Cornelius Venema
- *The Meaning of Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert Clouse
- *Kingdom Come*, Sam Storms
- *The Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*, Dennis Johnson

Appendix 4: Oral Exam Study Guide

The Oral Exam focuses on personal, polity/partnership themes, and pastoral ministry. Follow up questions on the Bible Knowledge Exam, Theology Exam, and written papers may also be asked in the Oral Exam.

The exam will be taken with an open Bible. Candidates should be prepared to answer a broad range of questions related to pastoral ministry. The goal of the pastoral ministry and counseling questions is to determine how well the candidate understands the nature of pastoral ministry according to Scripture, and to assess his ability to apply God's word in various situations.

Here are a few sample questions. These are not necessarily on the exam, but they give you a feel for the nature of the test:

1. *Personal*: Describe how God called you to pastoral ministry, and why you desire to be a pastor.
2. *Polity*: Describe the polity of Westview. Include elder governance and plurality, connection to other churches, and the role of the congregation.
3. *Pastoral Ministry*: What is the purpose of the weekly gathering of the church, and what should the church do when it gathers?
4. *Pastoral Ministry*: A gentleman in a Discipleship Class is having a hard time with the doctrine of election. He asks, "Are you saying that some people cannot be saved? If that is true how could they also be judged for not believing in a God who did not predestine them to believe?" How do you answer him?

Appendix 5: Suggested Development Timeline

1. January

- a. *Assigned Reading*: "Bible" section from [Required Reading](#); *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 4-5.

2. February – Doctrine of Scripture

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 2-8; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 2-8

3. March – The Triune God

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs. 9-14; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 9-13

4. April – God's Eternal Purpose & Election

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, ch. 16; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 9.
- b. *Assigned Paper*: What is expositional preaching, and why does it matter in the life of the church?

5. May – God's Creation of the Universe & Man

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 21-25; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch.15; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 11
- b. *Assigned Paper*: What is your view on the respective roles of men and women? Include how this applies in the church and in the home. Is it appropriate for a woman to address a mixed-gender audience? How about preaching to the entire congregation?

6. June – Man's Sin & Fall From Fellowship With God

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: Ch. 24.; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 16; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 12-13
- b. *Assigned Paper*: Discuss your view of the Bible's position on sexual ethics, briefly addressing the issues of homosexuality, same-sex attraction, and transgenderism. Include in your paper whether terms like "sexual orientation," "gay Christian," or "pronoun hospitality" are helpful categories. Include as well your understanding of the Bible's teaching about divorce and marriage after divorce.

7. July – Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 26; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 17; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 14

8. August – The Saving Work of Christ

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 27-29; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 18-19; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 15-16

9. September – The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit

- a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 30, 39, 52-53; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, ch. 20

- b. *Assigned Paper*: Describe your views on the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the church.
- 10. October – The Justifying Act of God**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs 32-38, 40; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 22-25
 - b. *Assigned Paper*: Describe your views on soteriology using the traditional components of the *ordo salutis*.
- 11. November – God’s Work in Faith & Sanctification; Living God’s Word by Meditation & Prayer**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, ch. 43; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 17-20 (more reading from prior month)
- 12. December – Christ’s Church & Her Ordinances; Christ’s Commission to Make Disciples of All Nations**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem: chs. 44-46, 48-50; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 26, 28-29; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, ch. 21
 - b. *Assigned Paper*: What is the mission of the church? Does the local church have any responsibility for the advance of the gospel in other nations? Does it have any responsibility to transform the culture of its own nation? What is your role as a pastor in these areas?
- 13. January – Death, Resurrection, & the Coming of the Lord**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, chs. 54-57; *Historical Theology*, Gregg Allison, chs. 31-33; *Reformed Dogmatics, Abridged in One Volume*, Herman Bavinck, chs. 23-25
 - b. ***Bible Knowledge & Theology Exams; communicate consideration to members
- 14. February – Pastoral Practice**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: Jim Hamilton, *What is Biblical Theology?*; Paul Tripp & Tim Lane, *How People Change*
- 15. March – Pastoral Practice**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: Mark Knoll, *Turning Points*; Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*
- 16. April – Pastoral Practice**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame*; David Powlison, *Seeing With New Eyes* (selective reading); Jeramie Rinne, *Church Elders*
- 17. May – Pastoral Practice**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: Harold Sankbeil, *The Care of Souls*; Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching & Preachers*
- 18. June – Pastoral Practice**
 - a. *Assigned Reading*: Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry* (selective reading)