

The Presbytery of the Western Reserve respectfully overtures the 218th General Assembly (2008) to:

- Commend presbyteries and Sessions that have incorporated serious theological reflection and prayerful discernment into their examination procedures, as recommended by the 217th General Assembly in its adoption of the report of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, and the Authoritative Interpretation adopted by the 217th GA (2006).
- Direct the Stated Clerk to collect and/or develop models of such procedures, and make them available to the whole church.
- Remind Sessions and presbyteries, as they carry out their constitutional responsibilities under G-6.0108,
 - That the purpose of ordination and installation examinations is to discern whether God has called and equipped persons for particular service, in order to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed, engage in faithful ministry in the world, build up the church of Jesus Christ, and bring glory to God; and
 - That in light of this purpose, persons being examined should be treated with respect;
 - That theological questions should offer the opportunity for the prospective member to demonstrate knowledge of the Reformed tradition and insight in application;
 - That personal questions on all topics should be posed with discretion and sensitivity, and questioners should recognize “that it would be a hindrance to God's grace to make a specific inquiry into the sexual orientation or practice of candidates for ordained office or ordained officers where the person involved has not taken the initiative in declaring his or her sexual orientation.” [Policy Statement and Recommendations, 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America]
- All ministry in the Church is a gift from Jesus Christ. Members and officers alike serve mutually under the mandate of Christ who is the chief minister of all. His ministry is the basis of all ministries; the standard for all offices is the pattern of the one who came “not to be served but to serve.” (Matt. 20:28) [G-6.0101]
- One responsibility of membership in the church is the election of officers who are ordained to fulfill particular functions. The existence of these offices in no way

diminishes the importance of the commitment of all members to the total ministry of the church. These ordained officers differ from other members in function only.

[G-6.0102]

- Ordination is an act by which those God calls to necessary, representative offices of leadership in God Service are identified and authorized for their work. The word ordination is derived from the word "order." In ordination the church orders itself for the ministry of God Service, authorizing and inducting women and men with particular gifts to equip and lead it in its service of God's Reign in the world.

Within the Reformed tradition, ordination refers to more than the liturgical action of prayer with the laying on of hands. It also includes actions by which the church discerns whether someone has been called by God:

- Testing of someone's sense of inner call—gifts, character, knowledge, and fitness for leadership;
- Election by some community of God's people;
- Ratification of these matters by some governing body of the church.

["Theology and Practice of Ordination in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),"
1992]