

May 13, 2011

2nd Pastoral Letter to the Congregations in the Presbytery of Shenandoah

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May the peace of Christ be with you all.

On May 10, 2011 a majority of the presbyteries approved the new language to the *Book of Order G-6.0106b* regarding ordination standards.

This new language outlining the gifts and requirements for ordained service says:

Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

There are several articles and letters on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) website www.pcusa.org regarding this action. I encourage you to read this information. These include letters from the leadership of the PC (U.S.A.) and former moderators of the General Assembly which are urging each of us to pray for one another and affirm what unites us as a church which is our common faith in Jesus Christ.

I am also attaching a sheet of "Frequently Asked Questions about Changes to Ordination Standards" from a colleague which I believe is a helpful resource.

There is a wide range of mixed emotions regarding this decision within this presbytery and across the denomination. As I said in my letter on May 6th (in the supplement packet for the presbytery meeting) I encourage each of us to continue to be in prayer for one another.

May it be so.....