Overview of Candidacy for the Gospel Ministry

*Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery, PCA*

There are two teams in the Presbytery to shepherd and examine you as you prepare for full time ministry in the PCA: The Shepherding Team and Licensure and Ordination Team. The Shepherding Team is responsible for shepherding you into the Presbytery as a candidate and then shepherding you as long as you remain in the Presbytery. The Licensure and Ordination Team will examine your academic, biblical and theological training. The two teams will work closely together with you. The following is a brief summary of what is required at each step in the process towards ordination:

**Candidacy (BCO 18)**

To become a candidate for the gospel ministry, you ordinarily must be a member of a church in the Presbytery for at least six months, and must obtain a letter of endorsement from your session as explained in BCO 18-2. At this time, you should coordinate with your pastor on choosing a teaching or ruling elder to be your mentor (see enclosed sheet on Oversight for Candidates). The letter from the session and your completed application (see the attached form) must be received by the Stated Clerk at least one month, preferably two months, prior to the date of the stated Presbytery meeting at which you desire to appear in order to be approved as a candidate for the gospel ministry. The stated meetings are either the second or third Saturday in February and September and the second or third Tuesdays in April and November. The stated clerk can provide the exact date. See the attached checklist for coming under care for more information.

**Licensure (BCO 19-1 to 19-6)**

 The examination for licensure to preach the gospel on a regular basis in the Presbytery begins with three written exams (English Bible, Book of Church Order, and Theology). The time and place of the exams will be arranged through the chairman of the Licensure and Ordination Team. You must preach and submit two evaluations by teaching or ruling elders and a sermon manuscript or outline to the Team. The team chairman will also arrange for you to be examined by the team. Once the team has approved your readiness to be licensed, the chairman will arrange for you to be brought before the Presbytery for their examination and approval.

**Internship (BCO 19-7 to 19-16)**

Normally, plan to have a rigorous one-year internship of full time ministry (two years if half-time) with as much variety of pastoral experience as possible. See the attached checklist for internships and guideline for internship proposals that must be completed before ordination. Your shepherd from the Shepherding Team will guide you through this process in coordination with your church.

**Ordination (BCO 20 & 21)**

 Normally, along with your academic transcripts, you will submit theology and exegetical papers to the chairman of the Licensure and Ordination Team. He will arrange for you to take written exams in church history, the sacraments, and either Greek or Hebrew. The Team will examine you orally I the areas of church discipline and the Westminster Standards, as well as, English Bible, Theology and the Book of Church Order. Your official call to a particular ministry work must be approved by the Team and must be received with a list of a minimum of three teaching and three ruling elders who will form a commission to preside over your ordination service.