

## GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING YOUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

### REQUIRED FORMATTING: ONE PAGE MAXIMUM; FONT- TIMES NEW ROMAN, 12 PT

All persons seeking membership in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, whether newly graduated from seminary or coming from another presbytery, are required to submit a Statement of Faith. This is read both to the Subcommittee on Calls and Credentials and the full Committee on Ministry. We think this is a good way to become acquainted with the prospective member, and often is the beginning of a fruitful discussion. In order to assure that your statement of faith meets our minimum expectations, we offer these guidelines.

- Your Statement of Faith is personal to you. You are not writing an academic compendium of systematic theology or a story of personal piety. You are writing a personal statement of faith to elders and pastors who want to know you as a future colleague in ministry.
- It is a *relational* statement:
  - Less a statement of objective and impersonal facts (“God created the world out of nothing.”)
  - More a statement of your relationship to the realities of God’s activity in the world (“I trust in God who is my creator and the creator and sustainer of our world.”)
- It is a *Presbyterian* statement. Does your statement reflect your rootedness in the Christian, Reformed and Presbyterian traditions?
- You *can* do it in a single page!
- We are hoping that you will address at least the following points:
  - Your understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.
    - Who is God the Father?
    - Who is Jesus Christ?
    - Who is the Holy Spirit?
    - How do these three persons interact?
  - What is the nature of grace?
  - How are we saved, or justified?
    - What is your understanding of the meaning of Jesus’ death on the Cross?
    - Is salvation limited to those who accept Jesus Christ as Savior?
  - What is the nature and role of Holy Scripture?
  - What is the nature and role of the Church?
  - What is the nature and role of the sacraments?
- Some additional suggestions:
  - Be familiar with the *Book of Confessions* and especially with our two most recent confessional documents (Confession of 1967 and A Brief Statement of Faith).
  - If any part of your statement is provocative, be ready politely to explain and calmly defend your position based on your understanding of Scripture, the Confessions, and other theological sources.
  - Try to be aware of the current climate of the Presbytery and the theological issues with which it is struggling. Several of the matters noted above (Christology, salvation) are current issues of concern to our Presbytery.