

CAM THOMAS

ORDINATION QUESTION G

Do you promise to , further the peace, wilily, and purity of the Church?

- *What is your role as a minister to further the peace, unity, and purity of the Church? Is that role different from that of any other member of the Church?*
- *What do you do when these three (peace, unity, and purity) are in tension?*

In our world, the are always having to maneuver through points of tension. Political ideologies, world events, interpersonal struggles, and a variety of issues find their way- into the local congregation. It is the calling of the pastor and the local congregation to remind the world that Christ is our point of reconciliation. The pastor is called to trade in the language *of tension* by uplifting and embodying Christ's call to *reconciliation*.

Though the hymn reminds us that *In Christ There Is No East or West* and the Apostle Paul writes that *...all of us are one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3.28), we know that God's family is diverse and that we all bring presuppositions and cultural nuances into worship, life in the Church, and the work of the Church. Naturally, these differences often lead to conflict In my role as pastor of a congregation, I will work to preach and teach. Good News to all points along the spectrum. In proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, I will studs alongside congregants and colleagues as together we realize that all of us are simultaneously convicted and redeemed by, the work of God's redemptive love. Through our confession, we realize that we all sin and fall tragically short of God's glory. However, the Good News is that we are all loved and are called to shared in God's glory through Christ.

During times of tension, I will try to listen more than I speak. Realizing that the emotions of anger and resentment stern from the realities of hurt and fear, it is my goal to be an attentive pastor giving care and serving alongside partners in ministry, I will work to facilitate meaningful and faithful conversations that seek to discern God's will for our life of service together. It is my- hope that t will know parishioners and congregational leaders on a personal level so that in times of tension, we might more sincerely ... *[speak our] truth in love* (Ephesians 4.15).

In these days, attention spans are short, differences are sensationalized, and common ground seems uncommon. In our worship and in our work, we remember that to make issues and stances more important than the unity and peace that we share in Christ is idolatrous, As pastor, I will work alongside partners in ministry to remind all of us that there is room at our one table, that we share one baptism, and that we are all still one in Christ.

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ORDINATION QUESTION H

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

- *What does it mean to you to “serve the people”?*

It is an honor to serve alongside partners in ministry at the congregation level. The role of the pastor, as this vow reminds us, is to not just *serve alongside*, but also to live into our calling as servant leaders. Following the way of Christ, we are called to serve God. In serving God, we serve the people.

Jesus reminds us that .. *One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God* (Matthew 4.4). In this way, the pastor is called to serve the people by providing them with frequent and faithful opportunities to engage God's Word to us. Through preaching, worship planning, and teaching, the pastor offers new ways to find God's truth for daily life. As a teaching elder, the pastor is to facilitate experiences with scripture for congregants of all ages, regardless of their theological acumen, educational level, or years in the Church. Serving the people reminds us to meet people where they are. It is the role of the pastor to reconsider and reevaluate the programs of the congregation. While programs may have been highly effective in generations past, they need continual assessment to be most responsive. By offering opportunities for fellowship, study, and engagement that work well for the logistics and lives for a variety- of people demonstrates pastoral and cultural sensitivity.

Pastors are called to meet others where they are and help them drink deeply- from the well of God. People are hungry for Good News and thirsty for a place to belong. In giving care to others, pastors, like John the Baptist, are to point beyond themselves to Christ. In all situations - those of great joy and deep hurt, the pastor helps to remn^s d others that God is

faithful still. Rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Romans 12.15), the pastor shares in many life experiences with congregants. Serving the people with *energy, intelligence, imagination, and love* means that when preaching, presiding at table and font, officiating weddings, bearing witness to the hope that we have in the resurrection, I will remember that God is glorified by our best efforts. When I feel like my best efforts are not where they need to be, it is also my responsibility to reorient my life in joy and in Sabbath so that the people might be served and God glorified.

Serving Christ means serving the people. Serving the people means serving Christ. It is a joy to share in this journey with the people so that together we, might experience holy interruptions where again God's Kingdom breaks through.