

b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?

The Scriptures are alive. They are living words that speak with power for us today, just as powerfully as they spoke in the days they were written. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, human authors were moved to write history, letters, poems, songs, and prophecy. These writings rich in history and tradition speak to us. The Scriptures are the testimony of God about Himself. They are the words of the Father about the Son and the Spirit; the words of the Son about the Father and the Spirit; and the words of the Spirit about the Father and the Son. As we read them, the Holy Spirit helps us interpret their meaning for today for the Church and for our individual lives. The Scriptures were never meant to be a text book offering information, but a guide meant to change our lives as we apply its teachings to the way we live.

c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

One of the great challenges of our ordination vows is to ask people to affirm this question. At one time the church had the Essential Tenets identified within our Constitution, but over the years they have been removed. During officer training it is important for us to help our members understand our historical roots and what we believe as practitioners of a Reformed faith. Some of the tenets I affirm and teach within officer training include:

1. The Authority of the Scriptures – as mentioned in question b, we believe that the Bible is God's word to us as revealed through the Holy Spirit.
2. God - We believe in a Trinitarian God. God alone is worthy of our worship. He is the one only living and true God who is revealed in the Bible and who is the source of all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness. God is infinite and eternal, Creator of all things. He is the sovereign ruler of creation, working all things according to the counsel of his omnipotent and righteous will.
3. Sin – Although made in the image of God, our forebearers chose disobedience bringing sin and death upon all humankind and creation. Because of this action we live in bondage to sin and under the judgement of God.
4. Christology- Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. He is fully God and fully human. He died for us and was raised to life so we would become in Him, the righteousness of God. Jesus Christ is God's only Mediator between God and humankind. Christ is God's unique agent for the salvation of the world. He is also the perfect expression of humanity as God designed it to be. In His complete obedience, He became the representative Human Being, modeling for us life that is rightly in God's image.
5. Salvation by Grace through Faith - Salvation is God's gracious work through Jesus Christ to reclaim humankind and all creation from sin and its consequences and to restore humans to the blessing of fellowship with God. Salvation is a gift of God's grace received by faith.