



# Words of Thanks

By Bishop Greg  
June 2019

The anxious, waiting time now begins. Graduating seminary students have concluded their colloquy exams. Their names are being considered for call in congregations or other ministries. Yet sometimes the process seems to take far longer than one would like.

In the midst of this waiting time, I would like to offer my words of thanks to all these seminary students who are now candidates for ministry as pastors or deacons. Thank you for the dedication and commitment you have brought to your studies. Thank you for the passion and insights you share, and for being willing to risk and offer yourselves to the church as leaders among us. We are blessed by your ministry. We are enriched by your call to serve. And we look forward to your years of service in our midst.

Words of thanks also must be expressed to those who serve on the Examining Committees. They do a lot of work in preparation for the colloquy exams. There usually are hundreds of pages of reading to complete, often with only a couple of weeks of preparation time. These members of the Examining Committee willingly give of their time to participate in this process.

What I find amazing about those who serve on the Examining Committee is that time and again they express their thanks for being appointed to the committee. In other words, they thank us for giving them all this work to do! They thank us for the hours of exams they must sit through and for the task of making a decision on behalf of the whole church. And yet they are the ones who say thank you for the privilege of serving on this important committee.

In contrast, we are the ones who need to say thank you to all who serve on these Examining Committees. They serve our church well. They take their responsibilities very seriously. They ask insightful questions; they encourage yet also challenge candidates; they engage in dialogue and have great conversations about theology and praxis. And at the end of each exam, these members of the Examining Committee spend time in prayerful discernment and conversation before providing their decision.

Many of the Examining Committee members tell me that the process of serving on this committee has helped them grow in their own faith and theological understanding. This process also has increased their awareness of the broader church and its varying contexts.

As Bishops, we participate in the Examining Committee only for those exams for students from our respective synods. As a result, I only participate in a portion of the exams held over the years. But even then, I must concur with the comments expressed by members of the Examining Committee. It is an honour to serve the church in this way. It is rejuvenating to explore and discuss our theology, to question and even to challenge candidates, and then to enter into dialogue. I am impressed with the conversations we have with these candidates for ministry. I am privileged to read the stories of their faith journeys, and I am always amazed at how God works in a myriad of ways in people's lives.

One last thank you needs to be added to this article. Let us also give thanks to all those professors, seminary staff, and home congregations and pastors who encourage, teach, guide, converse, lend support and mentor these candidates for ministry. Your faithful work is vitally important, and for that we all say thank you.