

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

June 12, 2018

The Committee on Preparation met on June 5, 2018 and submits the following report:

FOR INFORMATION:

CPM met with the following individual and voted to enroll her as an Inquirer under the care of the Presbytery of Detroit: **Christine Nicole James**

CPM met with the following individuals and voted to enroll them as Commissioned Ruling Elder candidates:

Debbie Lennis, White Lake Presbyterian Church
Tom Kostrzewa, Joslyn Avenue Presbyterian Church

CPM met with the following Inquirer, and sustained his annual consultation:
Joseph Sheeran

FOR ACTION:

Having met with and examined **Andrew Spaulding**, an Inquirer under care of the presbytery, the CPM recommends that the presbytery conduct an examination for the purpose of enrolling Mr. Spaulding as a Candidate.

An autobiographical sketch and a statement of faith are provided with this report. Commissioners are reminded that questions to the Inquirer should focus on his faith journey and sense of call.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Mary Bahr-Jones

Rev. Edward Dunn

Co-Moderators

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Andrew Spaulding

I steadfastly hold unwavering belief in the Triune God: The Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

God the Creator brought forth the World. Restoring order out of chaos, God moved mountains, shaped seas, and breathed life into us all. Doing these things as an act of Love, God invites us into full participation in Creation. God has been active in and throughout history, is continually active in the here and now, and will be active forever more. God owes God's creation nothing. As such anything bestowed by God on God's creation is given solely by God's immeasurable grace. God invites us into a relationship with Godself, with one another, and with the rest of God's creation. Because of God's grace we, the community of faith, is called to act with grace. God serves no individual, state, tribe, nation, or peoples. God acts according to God's will and it is incumbent that we recognize God does many things beyond our comprehensibility and that the vastness of God is infinite. God does not merit punishment via acts of natural disaster, or other such means, but has set forth a good and natural order from whence these things manifest. God is not of the Old Testament nor the New Testament, but continually transcends time and is ever hopeful that the covenant God made with God's people be upheld.

Christ the Redeemer, only begotten Son of God, was born of a woman and dwelled among us. Christ came not to condemn, but to save. Not only to save us from the conquering powers of sin, but to liberate all those oppressed by systematic sin. Christ's preaching and teaching continually extended a gracious hand to the marginalized, and His preaching and teaching continually motivate us to uplift those same marginalized. Fully human and fully Divine, Christ never existed prior to His birth. The Incarnation of Christ harkens to the Prophetic voices ringing throughout the Old Testament. Christ continued the prophetic tradition, and we as followers of Christ are expected to be prophetic witnesses to the injustices in our world. Christ was tried and executed by an imperial power, yet defied both death and imperial powers by rising. Christ died so that the Kingdom of God might be recognized on Earth. Christ's life, death, and resurrection, is the holiest embodiment of God's revolutionary and radical love.

The Holy Spirit as the Sustainer is the force by which we are united with the Triune God. Moving without inhibition, the Holy Spirit nourishes us through the partaking of Communion. The Spirit's presence in the Bread and Wine enable us to taste & see as we feast with the Church Universal in every time and place. Sealing us through the waters of Baptism, the Spirit brings us into a covenantal relationship with God and each other. The Spirit's presence in these sacraments serves as a unifying agent binding all who participate with the efficacious Grace of God and Christ Jesus.

May, 2018

BIOGRAPHY

Andrew Spaulding

I was born to an incredibly loving family in the wonderful city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. My mother had me when she was 40, and my father was born before WWII ended. Needless to say I have older parents. Although it's taken me a while to realize it, I was gifted with an older sister. We had our struggles as most siblings do, but have come to develop a deep relationship and appreciation for one another. Being that we are 9 years apart we have not always seen eye to eye. Even though we are siblings, we were essentially raised as single children. All things considered my parents did a rather fantastic job of raising us, large age gap aside.

Plymouth UCC was my church home for a good portion of my life. A diverse membership, Plymouth introduced me to the importance of creating and fostering an inclusive and welcoming congregation. Members at Plymouth have always been attentive to the injustices of society. As such I am well aware of the intersect of faith and the outside world and our calling as Christians to faithfully witness to the systemic issues in our society.

I grew up in the church. Literally. For the longest time my experience with faith was limited to a one hour time slot on Sundays. My parents are certainly religious, but religion has never been a hot topic at our dinner table. I was active in Sunday School only because my parents made me go to church. I begrudgingly went through Confirmation because that's what you did when you were in Middle School. All aspects of my faith life until college were very regimented and followed a clear and distinct path set forth by what was expected of me.

Attending the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville was a different experience. Not only was I over 12 hours away from my family; I had the chance to create a name for myself and escape the burden of living in my sisters shadow. While at Arkansas I became heavily involved in the United Campus Ministry (PCUSA & Disciples). This participation was due in large part to the fact that I was dating the poster child of the Presbytery of Arkansas. Sad to say that that relationship did not last, but a new relationship with the PC(USA) began to blossom. Participation in campus ministry opened my eyes to the ways in which God was impacting the lives of my peers. Discussions of personal beliefs and faith weren't swept under the rug, but were placed in the middle of the table. For the first time I fully appreciated the fact that the Holy Spirit was moving in my life. Quite possibly moving me towards a path I had never considered.

After graduation I served as a Young Adult Volunteer in Austin, Texas. Working for a faith based public policy non-profit, the importance of faith in the public square finally dawned on me. Given that my undergraduate degree was in Political Science and Religious Studies, I was presented with a rare opportunity to do actual work in my undergraduate background. Unsurprisingly the Holy Spirit was actively moving in Austin as my 'call' to ministry became a bit clearer.

I soon headed back to the Great White North and began a congregational internship at the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor. This work further affirmed my now blossoming sense of call to ministry. As an aside, I think all who consider minister should have some experience working in a church setting. While in Ann Arbor I joined First, was accepted into Union Presbyterian Seminary, and became an inquirer in the Presbytery of Detroit.

Seminary life at Union has been a roller coaster of emotional experiences. I have learned loads, and have forgotten even more. The community life at Union is incredible and is as close to a beloved community I have encountered yet. My studies at Union coupled with experiences serving on the Ministry Team at Montreat, my limited experience in CPE at Havenwood Heritage Heights in Concord, NH, and both internal and external affirmations have lead me to seek a movement to candidacy. There is no substantial doubt in my mind that I am called by God to be a Minister of the Word & Sacrament. I do not seek movement to candidacy lightly. I know that greater challenges are still to be faced. They will be faced with the utmost courage instilled in me by the Grace of God, the love of my family and friends, and the support of the Great Host of Witnesses found in the Presbytery of Detroit.