

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
THE REVEREND DANA VAUGHN, CHAIR
OCTOBER 24, 2017**

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends the following to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I. THAT** Louden A. Young, a member of New Hope Presbyterian Church in Asheville and a student at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, be enrolled as a Candidate following the required examination by Presbytery.

Recently, your Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) conducted interviews with an Inquirer who asked, with the support of their sponsoring congregation and Session, that they be enrolled as a Candidate in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. We recommend him to you today for your approval.

Louden A. Young comes with the support of his congregation and the recommendation of the Session of New Hope Presbyterian Church, Asheville. His written call to ministry/faith statement is contained in this packet (See CPM Attachment 1).

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- William M. Upchurch, a member of the Cherryville First Presbyterian Church, was enrolled as an Inquirer on August 16, 2016.
- Katheryn McGinnis, a member of the Hickory First Presbyterian Church, was enrolled as an Inquirer on September 20, 2017.
- William Wilson, a Candidate from the Asheville First Presbyterian Church, was certified ready to receive a call on September 20, 2017.

The Process of Becoming a Candidate and Beginning to Receive a Call

“It is important that those who are to be ordained as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the presbytery. For this purpose, a presbytery shall enter into covenant relationship with those preparing to become Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and with their sessions and congregations. This relationship shall be divided into the two phases of inquiry and candidacy.” (*Book of Order G-2.0601*)

Inquiry Phase:

“To be enrolled as an inquirer, the applicant shall be a member of the sponsoring congregation, shall have been active in the work and worship of that congregation for at least six months, and shall have received the endorsement of the session of the sponsoring congregation. The inquiry and candidacy phases shall continue for a period of no less than two years, including at least one year as a candidate.”

(*Book of Order G-2.0602*) This person is then examined by CPM, and if approved, is enrolled as an Inquirer.

“The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer’s suitability for ordered ministry.” (*G-2.0603*) A person must be an Inquirer for at least one year.

Candidacy Stage:

When an Inquirer believes, through their discernment, that they are called to the position of Minister of the Word and Sacrament, they can request that they become a Candidate. The Inquirer will meet with their Session and explain their sense of call. The Session can endorse them and recommend them to the CPM. The CPM, through its discernment, can decide to recommend them to the Presbytery. At the recommendation of the CPM, the Inquirer comes before the Presbytery to share part of their faith journey and their sense of call. The Presbytery can then ask them questions in respect to their sense of call, not questions of content of an ordination exam. They can ask about "their Christian faith, forms of Christian service, and motives for seeking the ministry." (Adopted from a previous *Book of Order*.)

"The purpose of the candidacy phase, then, is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament." (*G-2.0604*)

Preparation for a Call:

Before a person may take a call in our Presbytery, they must complete the following:

- Pass the Bible Content Exam.
- Pass the four Senior Ordination Exams (Biblical Exegesis, Theological Competence, Worship and Sacraments, and Church Polity).
- Complete a two-day battery of assessments administered by a Career & Personal Counseling Center.
- Complete one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education training (CPE).
- Normally, complete at least one year at a PCUSA seminary.
- Meet annually with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.
- Have been an Inquirer at least one year and have been a Candidate at least one year.
- Take a course in Reformed Theology and Polity.
- Complete Seminary.

Must be Approved by CPM to Receive a Call:

A Candidate may not begin to enter negotiations about a call as a minister of the Word and Sacrament without the approval of the CPM, which has been delegated this task. When a Candidate has completed the above, the CPM will examine the Candidate and determine if he/she is ready to begin looking for a call, and if so, will "certify the person ready to receive a call." The Candidate will also have their Personal Information Form (PIF) reviewed and approved by CPM. When the person receives a call, the Candidate will be examined by the receiving presbytery.

If a Candidate who is under care of this Presbytery receives a call within our bounds, that candidate will preach before the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and their sermon will be included in the Presbytery report.

CPM ATTACHMENT 1

Louden Young
Statement on Call
Preparation for Ministry 2017

When I became an inquirer, my image of calling had little clarity. Thinking back now, I cannot help but think of Robert Frost's yellow woods and the two roads diverging in them. Down one road, my life in dedicated service to the Lord and to the Church, and all of the fruits of the Spirit that may come from such work. Down the other road lies a life that is anything else. Since I was a small child, and had first heard of the story of Moses, I had hoped at some point in my life to encounter the very voice of God instructing me on what my life was to be, where I was to go, what I was to do. But there is no burning bush at this fork in the road.

It would be trivial to speak only of the way forward without an acknowledgement of the path that brought me to it. For every fork in the road, there is the road that leads to it. My first interactions with the Gospel came, as it did for many, at the behest of my parents, Lynn and Maria. It was through their uncompromising hands that I was shepherded to church on Sundays. Whereas had I been left to my own devices, I would have found little difficulty filling the several hours our family spent at church on Sunday mornings in the many worlds of my imagination and play. But attendance was not optional in my mother's household, and thus, there I was, each and every Sunday morning. My family attended a small, relatively new church in South Asheville, appropriately named New Hope Presbyterian. Though I have few memories of my early childhood that I can recollect with any detail, my exploits have been documented thoroughly by our de facto church historian and photographer, Pam. I was the child that always had something to say during the children's sermon and was the first to raise my hand when questions were asked, whether I had an answer or not. Jesus Christ was a character I knew well from the stories I was told, and I found more joy in the sandbox used to depict the landscape of the road to Jerusalem, than from the words of Scripture those props were presenting. Even in my youth, I was a very social being, and Church provided an outlet for that energy.

My parents were very active in the Church, particularly my mother. She had the vision, passion, and faith to be an integral part of the ministries as New Hope. As a nurse who spoke Spanish, my mother immediately felt the Spirit moving in her toward a new ministry the Presbytery was developing in Guatemala. As a member of the Presbytery's medical team, my mother spent two weeks every 6-8 months for a few years going to Guatemala. There she would teach basic hygiene and first aid in the villages where the Presbytery was establishing sister churches. Our sister church El Divino Salvador carved out a special place in my mother's heart. My four older sisters had mixed reviews on life in the Church at New Hope, though this was not apparent until we had grown up. My sisters all participated in church. Jessica and Tracey found a primary friend group. Beth and Alexis were firmly encouraged to participate in all the activities New Hope had to offer. My sisters' involvement with the church poked at my sense of competition, setting a bar that I could not help but try and exceed. Tracey and Jessica served as youth elders, so I became the youth elder my senior year of high school. Jessica joined the presbytery's youth council, so I joined the youth council. In the footsteps of my parents and my sisters, I too travelled to many places to do mission work: Ft. Meyers, FL, Gautier, MS, Diamondhead, LA, and Taxco, Mexico.

That is not so say I did any of those things without thought or concern. I had my own faith and my own beliefs. But I was still waiting for that burning bush moment. So until that moment came, I imitated those who I felt best exemplified what it meant to be a good Christian. When my family was confronted with course-altering change in the form of my mother diagnosis of epilepsy and multiple Sclerosis, church became an escape. I was drawn to the consistency of my church life, when life at home felt like it was going all over the place. When my family was no longer doing the things I imitated earlier in my life, I turned to my church family for guidance, which they were more than happy to provide. What started as imitation became habit. And habit provided comfort for me.

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When I started college at Maryville, I came to the realization that the habits and support I came to rely on were not immediately available. I was in a new place, and this place did not have the church I was familiar with, nor did it have the people I had always imitated. The uncompromising shepherds responsible for my Sunday morning attendance were two hours away, and the choice was now mine and mine entirely. Do I continue to live out my faith in the way I had learned to, or do I let that part of myself be shed for all the newness of this experience? It became apparent early on that it would end up being a little bit of both. I was no longer attending church every Sunday, or taking part in a youth group, or singing in a choir. I was, however, attending meetings of the progressive Christian community, attending Chapel on Tuesdays, and getting involved as a Church relations intern. I was living my faith in a new way. Imitation and habit gave way to myriad of different perspectives and experiences of God and the Spirit at work in the world. I was opened to new spiritual practices, such as extended periods of silence and prayer, fasting, and reading the scriptures with a more academic lens. What I knew of the Bible was put under the microscope of my new education, and not all aspects of what I believed made it out of college. A certain aspect of mysticism departed from my beliefs, and was replaced by a deeper understanding of my relationship with God. It was also during this time that I met the woman, whom in a year, I will have the privilege to marry. My relationship with her continues to inform my understanding of love and sacrifice.

After I graduated, I returned home, to the familiar, because I had not felt like I knew what the next step would be. I found a job with a durable medical supply company in their inside sales department. I moved into a house with my best friend and my sister. I was comfortable, independent, and ultimately, incomplete. I did not immediately return to the church I grew up in. I was afraid to be in the church with the legacy of my family around every corner, a reminder of all the changes that had happened with my mother's illness. I was tired of answering the questions about how my mother was, or how my family was. I started volunteering at First Presbyterian since it was there that I had attended youth group. I became an adviser, and found sustaining joy in my work with those youth. Though I was not particularly fond of my 9 to 5 job, it provided me with an opportunity to do this ministry. My involvement with the youth group led to my involvement as an adviser with the presbytery's youth council. Each Sunday evening with the youth at First Presbyterian, each youth retreat and rally spent with the youth council, each committee meeting and week at Montreat, served as a jumpstart for my soul. I could no longer pretend that God was not moving me toward a life in ministry. The day I decide to attend seminary, a relief set over my body that was unlike anything I had experienced before. It was a puzzle piece fitting exactly where it is suppose to.

Since arriving at Columbia, I have felt nothing but affirmed in pursuing the education and work that God is bidding me toward. I have been encouraged by my peers and professors, inspired by family and friends, and sustained by Jesus Christ and the words found in the scriptures. So again I consider my image of calling and I realize that the answer is much clearer now. I have been waiting for a burning bush, all the while not realizing that my life, up until this point, has been just that. As I was preoccupied with "knowing" exactly how I thought God might speak to me, God has been calling me at every moment. In every fruit of the Spirit, God has been at work in my life, leading me here. I have known Christ in the work ethic of my father and the passion of my mother. I have experienced the grace of God in the many gifts of my sisters: Beth's strength, Tracey's compassion, Jessica's tireless caregiving, Alexis' creativity. I have felt the Spirit in the loyalty of friends, the encouragement and support of my church family, and the unconditional love of my partner, Elizabeth. The Word has been manifested through Jesus Christ in the many acquaintances I have made, in the relationships the Spirit has provided growth to, throughout my life, at every stage. And in this life, I have come to know the truth, that God is the one God, father and mother of all creation, the giver of life. Jesus Christ is my Lord, and mediator of my salvation, through his life, death, and resurrection, to whom I turn when there is none to comfort. The Spirit is at work in my life, so that God's will may be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven.

It is in this truth, that God is above me, in Christ, God is for me, and in the Spirit, God works through me, that I realized there is, but one response. Where I always imagined there would be a fork in

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the road, I now understand there is but one path. And the decision I must make is not between one life or another, but rather if I am prepared to take that first step toward Christ. I fully understand the magnitude of that step. It is a step away from my worldly ambitions, from the "dream" jobs I once thought I wanted, from the possessions I always wanted to own, from the very depths of my own self-interest. It is a step toward discipline and faithfulness. It is a step toward the vulnerable, the least of us. It is step toward conflict with worldly powers that seek to solidify injustice, a step toward the hoses, and the dogs, and the tear gas. It is a step toward each and every one of you. It is a step toward the Cross. When I was younger, I imitated good Christians. I am now ready, in as much as my human-ness allows, to be an imitator of Christ, to love as he loves me. And in this first step forward and all the steps of my life to come, I know that the grace of God, the Love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the community of the Spirit are with me, always.