

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Rev. Dr. James F. Bernhardt, Chair

October 23-24, 2009

FIRST SECTION

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY, AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION, OR A TASK FORCE THAT REQUIRE ACTION BY PRESBYTERY:

The Committee on Ministry meeting will be on October 13th, which is after the Presbytery Packet deadline. Any actions from that meeting will be included in the Addendum.

SECOND SECTION

The Book of Order provides that the Committee on Ministry may be given authority by the Presbytery to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve and present calls for service of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other Presbyteries, required by G-11.0402 and G11.0502g, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur, to dismiss ministers to other Presbyteries, and to approve administrative commissions to ordain/install with the provision that such actions be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery. (G-11.0502h) This permission was granted to our Committee on Ministry; therefore, the following actions are to be simply admitted to the record.

I. APPROVED THE EXAMINATION AND TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA:

A. SHANNON J. KERSHNER

From: Grace Presbytery
As: Pastor, Black Mountain Presbyterian Church
Effective: October 5, 2009
(See COM Attachment 1 for Bio Credo.)

II. APPROVED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP AND TERMS OF CALL:

A. SHANNON J. KERSHNER

Salary	\$38,500
Housing Allowance	38,500
Social Security	5,891
Auto Allowance	4,500
Professional Dev.	2,000
Total	\$89,391

Pension/Insurance	Yes
Four Weeks Vacation	Yes
Two Weeks Study Leave	Yes

**III. APPROVED THE CONTINUATION OF COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR
RELATIONSHIP:**

- A. Philip Adams and Conley Memorial Presbyterian Church
Extended: August 5, 2009 - August 4, 2010

IV. APPROVED AS MODERATOR:

- A. Tyler Martin and Sylva First Presbyterian Church

COM ATTACHMENT 1

Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner
July 2009

A Statement of Faith

I believe in the one Triune God, traditionally described as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that God is the Creator of all we can see, yet more than we can possibly fathomⁱ. I believe that God is the very definition of love, justice, power, mercy and grace. I believe God knew my name before I was formed in my mother's womb and called me "daughter" before I was placed in my parents' armsⁱⁱ.

I believe God passionately loves us and desires fellowship and relationship with us. God also sees clearly our weaknesses and our frailties, our desire for power and our willingness to be completely self-centered. God sees clearly our brokenness and the ways we live as if we were still held in bondage. And God loves us far too much to let us get away with our own sinⁱⁱⁱ. And so God sent a part of God's very self to be one of us, one with us, in all of our pain, suffering, joy, and love. Through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, God took into Godself what it means to be human on earth. There is nothing that we experience that God has not already taken into God's own heart through Jesus. And Jesus has saved us from the powers of death, isolation, emptiness, and despair^{iv}. With his life as recorded in Scripture, Jesus shows us what it means to live and love fully into who God calls us to be. And on the cross, Jesus set us free from the dominion of death^v. Through the empty tomb, Jesus calls us to move out of our fearfulness and into our hope.

I believe the Holy Spirit is ever present in and around us. The Spirit is always at work. The Spirit sustains us in our deepest despair and celebrates with us in our greatest joy. The Spirit prays our prayers before we can even articulate our thoughts^{vi}. The Spirit opens up the words of Scripture, unveiling God's face and connecting our story with God's story^{vii}. The Spirit enables us to live out of hope, leading us out of the darkness and into the light.

For baptized women and men, being a part of the Church, Christ's body, is not just another optional activity. It is a call. It is God's mandate. Because of our baptism, we are the body of Christ together, even when it is difficult^{viii}. We celebrate this family relationship at the Table when, through the Lord's Supper, we are mysteriously joined with Christ in the feast that is promised and will be all in all. The bread and wine give us the nourishment and spiritual sustenance to continue on our journey as people of God, loving one another, working for justice and reconciliation, and proclaiming that God's arms are long enough to embrace the whole world^{ix}.

Ultimately, I believe God is the One in control and will live up to God's name. We are invited to joyfully participate in God's mission and work in the world. I also believe, however, that our hope rests securely in who God is and in God's actions, and not in who we are nor in what we can do. I do believe that one day there will be no more weeping, pain, nor sorrow. The shroud will be lifted (Isaiah 25) and we will all live together as whole people, rejoicing in the One whose other names are Mercy and Love. But until that day comes, God continues to call us into deeper faithfulness, never abandoning us to merely ourselves^x.

COM ATTACHMENT 1

Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner
Brief Statement on Faith Journey – July 2009

I wish that I had a dramatic call story that I could tell you—one like Samuel, Mary, or Paul. But, my story is not very dramatic. It is full of ordinary people and ordinary activities that have combined into the gift of the life I get to live.

My mother and father parented me out of my baptism from the very beginning. I knew that I was deeply loved, no matter what. But I also knew that I was not the only one deeply loved. God loves all people. And I also knew that my baptism linked me with all God's children as family. I lived out my baptism in many ways, but particularly through my involvement with the church. One reason I was so involved was because I was the preacher's kid. A bigger reason, though, was because church and camps felt like home to me. Church was a holy space of freedom to me. I was allowed to be myself—no more and no less.

But although I loved the church and was very active, I was not about to enter ordained ministry. My father did it. And I knew that it was an odd vocation. So I decided that I would study psychology in college. And yet, as a new high school graduate, I found myself on the Mo Ranch Acting Team embodying a character named Hope. And those moments of being Hope offered the most dramatic sense of call I have ever received. I felt more myself as Hope than I ever had felt before. I felt I was being who God had created me to be. By the end of that week, I knew with clarity that I was being called into ministry.

I told my father, the minister, that God was calling me to seminary. But both he and my mother made the wise move of helping me slow down a bit. They advised me to go to college and just "think about it." And so I did. And those moments of clarity were shoved into the back of my mind as I explored who I was and who I was not. I took a break from church and realized later that was a smart move. For during that break, I discovered I deeply missed the community of faith and I deeply missed living out my faith. I felt like I had cut off a part of myself. So, I began to pray again and went back to worship. At that same time, I was enrolled in a religion class. After I had given a presentation, the professor, who was nominally Presbyterian, asked me if I had ever considered using my gifts from within the Church. My sense of call came flooding back and I decided to stop denying the Hope that was within me.

After graduating from college, Greg and I got married and I decided to work in a church full time just to make sure. And indeed, every experience I had served to confirm that sense of call. My husband and I entered Columbia Theological Seminary in 1996 and enjoyed the gift of being full-time seminary students together.

I served for almost three years as an Associate Pastor near Houston. In 2004, we moved up to Irving, where I have served as the Head of Staff at Woodhaven Presbyterian Church for the past 7 ½ years. We have two fantastic children. Hannah is going into the 3rd grade and Ryan just turned five. My husband spent the first seven years of my Irving ministry working primarily as the stay-at-home parent, but is now living out his vocation as a Certified Financial Planner. And on most days, I thank God for calling me to be a "professional Christian" (thank you Shirley Guthrie for that phrase).

Truth be told, I would not change a thing about what I do. Ministry is an honor and a gift. And I am excited about this next part in my life when, if the way be clear, I will start a new journey with the people of Black Mountain Presbyterian Church as their pastor.

- ⁱ Apostles Creed
- ⁱⁱ Brief Statement of Faith, Lines 47-51
- ⁱⁱⁱ BSF, Lines 27-39
- ^{iv} C67, Section 2, "The Sin of Man"
- ^v Declaration of Barmen, #2
- ^{vi} BSF, Lines 65-71
- ^{vii} C67 – Section regarding the authority of Scripture and the work of the Spirit
- ^{viii} C67 – "The Ministry of Reconciliation", paragraph under "Direction"
- ^{ix} C67 – "The Ministry of Reconciliation," paragraph under "The Lord's Supper"
- ^x C67 – "The Fulfillment of Reconciliation"