

PRESBYTERY OF
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA



ADDENDUM

January 30, 2016

First Presbyterian Church
Newton

ADDENDUM K-1

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
THE REVEREND ROBERT J. TUTTLE, CHAIR
JANUARY 30, 2016**

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

RECOMMENDATION:

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| <p>I. THAT David Brandon Smith, a member of Montreat Presbyterian Church, and a student at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, NJ, be enrolled as a Candidate following the required examination by Presbytery.</p> |
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Recently, your Committee on Preparation for Ministry conducted an interview with an Inquirer who asked, with the support of his sponsoring congregation and Session, that he be enrolled as a Candidate in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. We recommend him to you today for your approval.

David Brandon Smith comes with the support of his congregation and the recommendation of the Session of Montreat Presbyterian Church. His written call to ministry/faith statement is contained in this packet (see CPM Attachment 1).

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- Jason Myers, a candidate from the Fairview Presbyterian Church in Lenoir, was certified ready to receive a call on January 20, 2016.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is hoping that you will help to identify and encourage people whom you feel that God is calling into the ministry to be a Teaching Elder. Care for people who are feeling a call to the ministry of Teaching Elder is a shared responsibility of the Session and the Presbytery. The process is described below.

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

“It is important that those who are to be ordained as teaching elders receive full preparation for their task under the direction of the presbytery. For this purpose, a presbytery shall enter into a covenant relationship with those preparing to become teaching elders 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:

In order to begin the inquiry phase, an applicant must 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 their session. 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 teaching elders to explore that call together so that the

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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 Teaching Elder, 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 teaching elders." (G-2.0604)

Preparation for a Call:

Before a person may take a call in our Presbytery, they must have completed 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.

Must be Approved by CPM to Receive a Call:

A Candidate may not begin to enter negotiations about a call as a Teaching Elder 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.

Statement of Call: David B. Smith

Before he died, my grandfather often told me, “never stop questioning what others take for granted. Behind every answer, there is a new question begging to be asked.” My faith journey has been characterized by a passionate desire to ask deep questions about God and the created order. This inquisitive sojourn through the wilderness of belief has given me opportunities to join in the life of many communities over the years.

I did not grow up in the PCUSA. I attended fundamentalist Christian schools in Hickory and Conover, NC for most of my early education. Much of what I knew about religion at that point came from the required Bible classes at my school, but I often went to First Baptist Church of Rhodhiss, NC (SBC) with my grandmother. One Sunday, when I was eight, the pastor asked me to recite Psalm 139 during the worship service. Through all the questioning and all the pain that would characterize my walk with Christ in the years that followed, the words of that Psalm remained on my heart: “for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

My family moved around a lot during my childhood, so we never connected with a church. It was not until my sophomore year in high school that I started asking existential questions of faith. My English teacher nominated me to be a “Servant Leader” at school, because she believed I had leadership potential. I told her that I needed to defer my acceptance of the opportunity for a while, because I wasn’t sure if I bought into my school’s version of Christianity. To my surprise, she was very understanding. During that time, I started attending church regularly at FBC Rhodhiss. It didn’t take me long to build a relationship with the youth pastor. While he had no formal theological education (neither did the senior pastor), he provided a safe space for me to ask tough questions. I began reading scripture and praying on a daily basis. I soon confessed my faith in Jesus as the Christ and decided to be baptized during the second semester of my sophomore year.

During that same year, one of my Bible teachers introduced me to Ligonier Ministries. Ligonier espouses a conservative version of Reformed theology. I read R.C. Sproul’s “The Holiness of God” and I was immediately hooked. Never before had my mind been so stimulated by reading religious materials. I went to the Ligonier National Conference in Orlando, FL that summer and I was inspired to continue exploring my faith. During the same summer, I went on two mission trips. The first was to Clarkston, Georgia where our group worked with children of refugees living in the community. The second was to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. While still reflecting on these experiences, I began my Junior year with a zeal for the Christian faith that has remained constant over the years, even though it is expressed differently today.

After that formative summer, I felt called to leave my faith community at FBC Rhodhiss and seek out a church that reflected my emerging values. While I remained connected to the people at FBC for many years, I quickly got involved with a non-denominational evangelical church called Discovery Christian Fellowship in Hickory, NC. I continued to explore my faith and was soon asked to lead the fifth and sixth grade “Connection Group” at the church. During this time, I also accepted my teacher’s nomination as a “Servant Leader” at my school and started leading a weekly Bible study there.

In college I was exposed to more progressive expressions of the Reformed tradition and I eventually made my way to the PCUSA. During my sophomore year, Montreat Presbyterian Church became my spiritual home. Rev. Maggie Lauterer was our pastor at that time. She was the first straight person to whom I “came out.” In her caring presence, I felt embraced by God in a way that I never had before. Coming out at Montreat College was far from easy, but the support of my church family at MPC was a sustaining force in my life. It was the witness of my Christian family in Montreat that helped me to fully embrace my identity as a gay man alongside my calling to serve God in the PCUSA as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

In the middle of our senior year in college, my friend William Wilson and I were asked by Rev. Bobbi White and Rev. Mark Ramsey to serve the wonderful folks at Paint Gap Presbyterian Church in Burnsville, NC for a short time. This request came amidst our time of service with the amazing people at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Asheville, NC. There were certainly difficult aspects of our tenure at Paint Gap, but serving there helped me to grapple with my emerging identity as a pastoral

caregiver and servant of God in the church. The witness of Paint Gap Church as a congregation of the PCUSA may be over, but the impact of that community on the lives of those who have lived and served within it will never be forgotten. Working in that little church gave me a new confidence in God's ability to work in unexpected ways and inspired me to trust anew in the transformational power of resurrection hope in challenging times.

When I left WNC for Princeton Theological Seminary in July of 2014, I embarked on a new leg of my faith journey. After finishing Greek School, I took on two part-time jobs. The first was at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Trenton, NJ and the other was at the HUB in Princeton. Serving at Covenant, while studying at PTS, was formative. Covenant is an urban congregation the once had a membership of more than 1,300. Over the years, attendance had declined and parishioners found themselves asking difficult questions about their future. Along with my colleagues, William Wilson and Jason Myers (both Candidates for Ordination in our Presbytery), I helped provide staffing support and pastoral care throughout this difficult time in the church's life.

My experience at the HUB was very different. The HUB is an organization that seeks to provide a safe space for adults with mental, emotional and developmental differences. Until it merged with a larger organization in May of 2015, it was housed in the Princeton United Methodist Church. Serving at the HUB provided me with both skill and passion for working with some of the most marginalized people in our society. It also helped me to understand the importance of pastoral leadership in non-profit organizations.

My summer Field Education placement was in Baltimore, MD. I served as the Seminary Intern for The Center. The Center is a mission partner of the Presbytery of Baltimore. It partners with congregations from around the country to empower churches and organizations from across the theological spectrum to engage in grass-roots mission work throughout the city. At The Center, my passion for a faith that speaks to the lived realities of oppressed communities was continually stoked. While there, I was also inspired by the ways that Christians worked across boundaries of theological and social disagreement in order to witness to the transformative power of the gospel in a city facing crisis.

Throughout this academic year, I have been serving as the Seminary Intern at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church in Bryn Mawr, PA. I chose BMPC, because I knew that it would provide many opportunities to ask new questions of faith. Bryn Mawr is a large, affluent congregation, with a long history of global witness. The struggles faced by the people I encounter there are somewhat different than the trails experienced by people in other communities that I have served. Nevertheless, their passionate search for meaning and significance comes from the same source. God is doing amazing things at BMPC, and I am honored to be a part of it.

In preparation for my fourth semester in seminary, I have been reflecting on the ways my faith has been continually formed and reformed over the past few years. Much of my recent academic work has focused on bridging the gap between the way I have experienced Christian community as a gay man and Christ's call to work for peace and unity in the church. Like many other gay Christians, I know what it is like to bare the brunt of the church's inhospitality. At the same time, I have also experienced what it is like to encounter the living Christ in unexpected acts of compassion and grace. I am looking forward to Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) next summer, because I believe the program will enable me to further refine my sense of call. At this point, I do not know for sure where God will take me after seminary. Will it be into a pulpit, a Ph.D. program or a non-profit organization? I am not sure. Whatever the specifics, I know that I am called to serve God as a Teaching Elder in the PCUSA. This calling has been impressed upon my life, not because the Presbyterian Church is all I've ever known nor because it is easy being part of a community that is facing challenge. I feel called to this task because it is in the common life of this rag-tag group of sojourners that I have encountered God's radical love. I seek your approval to become a Candidate for ordination in this presbytery, because I want to serve God in a community that is not afraid to ask tough questions of their faith. I seek your approval, because I want to continue living out the gospel alongside fellow Presbyterians who are committed to this fellowship, even amidst disagreement. I seek your approval, because I can't imagine doing anything else. May God continue to bless us all with new opportunities to grow in our faith by responding to God's call upon our lives.

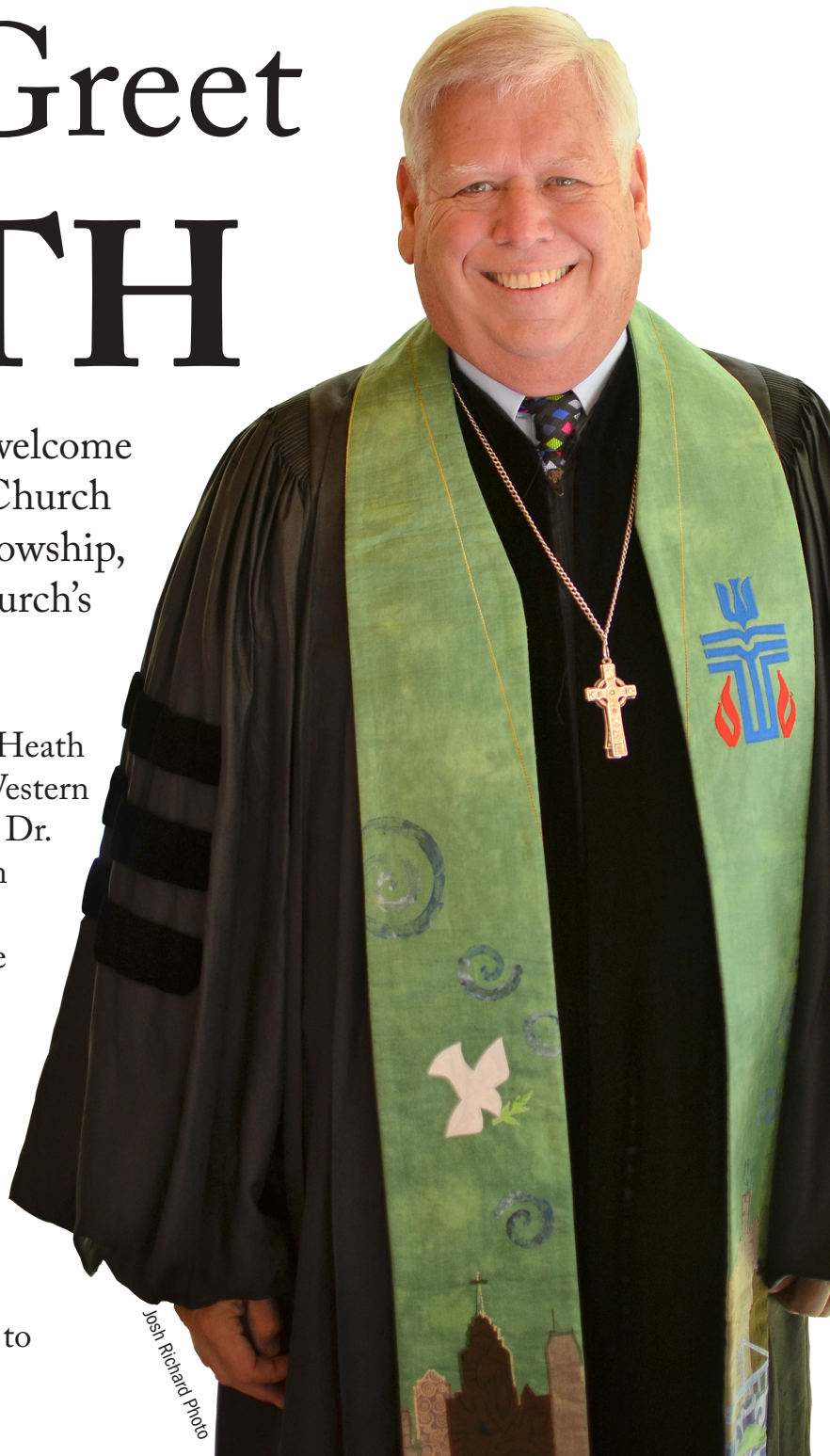
Meet & Greet HEATH

Gaston Area Presbyterians (GAP) welcome the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for a special evening of fellowship, worship and discernment for our church's place in the world today.

Elected at the 2014 General Assembly, Dr. Heath K. Rada is a member of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina and a resident of Montreat. Dr. Rada served as President of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (now Union Presbyterian Seminary) in Richmond before going to work for the American Red Cross.

GAP invited Rada to share his tales and wisdom from his journeys around the globe representing our denomination as his term winds down. He will speak and then take questions from those in attendance.

Please join us for this excellent opportunity to meet with Heath Rada.

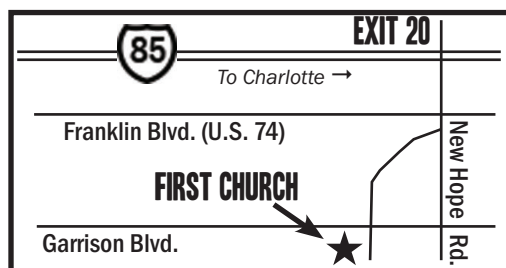


Josh Richard Photo

FRIDAY, FEB. 12, 2016 @ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GASTONIA

6 P.M. Reception in Fellowship Hall
(refreshments, meet and greet)

7 P.M. Worship, presentation and a Q and A
in the church Sanctuary



First Presbyterian Church, Gastonia.
1621 East Garrison Blvd. Gastonia 28054

Gaston Area Presbyterians
www.gap.wncpresby.org