

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA  
COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY  
THE REVEREND DANA VAUGHN, CHAIR  
APRIL 25, 2017**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- I. THAT** Andrew J. Bowman, a member of Black Mountain Presbyterian Church and a student at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, be enrolled as a Candidate following the required examination by Presbytery.
- II. THAT** Rebecca M. Heilman, a member of Waldensian Presbyterian Church and a student at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, be enrolled as a Candidate following the required examination by Presbytery.

Recently, your Committee on Preparation for Ministry conducted interviews with two Inquirers who asked, with the support of their sponsoring congregations and Sessions, that they be enrolled as Candidates in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. We recommend them to you today for your approval.

**Andrew J. Bowman** comes with the support of his congregation and the recommendation of the Session of Black Mountain Presbyterian Church. His written call to ministry/faith statement is contained in this packet (see CPM Attachment 1).

**Rebecca M. Heilman** comes with the support of her congregation and the recommendation of the Session of Waldensian Presbyterian Church. Her written call to ministry/faith statement is contained in this packet (see CPM Attachment 2).

**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

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.
- Complete Seminary.

### **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.

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION:**

- Allison Greene, a member of the Gastonia First Presbyterian Church, was enrolled as an Inquirer on October 19, 2016.
- Brett Gudeman, a member of the Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, was enrolled as an Inquirer on January 18, 2017.
- Barrett Payne, a Candidate from the Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, was certified ready to receive a call on March 15, 2017.

# CPM ATTACHMENT 1

Andrew Bowman

Faith Journey

As I was growing up, faith was an extremely important part of my life. I was raised in a rather fundamentalist, evangelical tradition. I am the oldest of five children, and my parents were directors of a Christian summer camp and retreat center. We attended church every Sunday. We prayed regularly as a family, and we read devotional stories every night from a children's Bible. I went to Sunday School and VBS, Bible summer camps and a Christian elementary school. I cannot remember a time when I did not think of myself as a Christian. At age nine, when my parents agreed that I was ready, I was immersed on Easter Sunday, 1993.

Through high school, I was constantly involved in youth group and Bible studies, and I surrounded myself with friends who believed the same as I did. When my church did not offer youth group, I sought one out through my friends. God was extremely important to me, and my faith served very much as my identity in high school. Both because of my parents' vocational ministry and my regular involvement in church activities, I felt comfortable with the notion of a call to ministry, but I ignored whatever tugs I felt. My faith was genuinely mine, but it was as-yet untested, and thus unproven.

I began my freshman year of college at a small liberal arts university in central Indiana. Towards the end of that first year I began to feel a call to ministry more clearly. I realized God had a direction and a purpose for me. The tradition of my youth did not require seminary education but instead encouraged Bible college, so I transferred to Johnson University, a small school in east Tennessee. I dove into my Bible and ministry classes, as well as immersing myself in volunteer ministry and deep study and conversation with friends and classmates. My coursework was theologically conservative, but through my extracurricular study my own beliefs began to slowly change. I began to perceive that the God I was being taught was different from the God I understood. I became more and more frustrated with the conservative nature of my tradition. A six-month, full-time youth internship with a church in my junior year only deepened my frustration, as I saw the effects of repressive theology in the lives of my youth.

Immediately after returning to campus following my internship, I was involved in a serious head-on car accident. In addition to a severely broken nose and fractured skull, the experience left me with a tested and shaken faith. Until then I had been convinced that God would always protect me; the doubt that the accident instilled somehow allowed more and more questions to surface. I spiraled deeper into doubt and mistrust of the God I thought I knew, and became enveloped in apathy and depression.

For two or three years, I wandered emotionally, spiritually, and geographically. I claimed agnosticism, but in truth I was actively ignoring God's claim on my heart. I found it difficult to conceive of a God that could meet me on my own terms, where I was. Ultimately, I was struggling against the faith of my youth. Yet I had not rejected God completely. I still felt drawn toward much that seemed mystical and divine. I read widely, listening for spiritual wisdoms from many sources. As I travelled I looked for people and places that filled me with hope, joy, and comfort. I saw that these encounters were in many ways the divine speaking to

# CPM ATTACHMENT 1

me, calling me back toward something larger than myself. I found that when I was receptive to these experiences I was a happier and better person.

In 2008 I turned a corner, finally acknowledging the profound spirituality that I felt in my soul. I undertook a quest to discern the God I felt in my heart, not the God I thought I knew. I searched and struggled for months, fighting depression and overcoming fears and doubt. All of my time was devoted to a single question: was God truly *there*? I read ravenously, I tried to pray, I attempted to meditate, and I talked about aspects of spirituality to anyone who would listen. My searching finally began to pan out. After several profound realizations and numerous deep conversations I experienced a revelation of God's presence so overwhelming and holy that it still haunts me today. I was assured not only of God's existence and perfect love, but also of God's exquisite plan and concern for my life.

After that I began to seek out a church again, a community that could help me truly understand and utilize what I had discovered. I felt pulled to tell others what I had discerned, but still I rebelled against the call. When I met my wife Megan and she introduced me to Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, I knew I had found my home. We worked together with the youth group, and I became involved in leading liturgy and other aspects of the church's life. I was hungry for deeper spiritual and theological knowledge. A job teaching outdoor education at the YMCA Blue Ridge conference center helped me to recognize that I truly enjoyed teaching people. Finally, with Megan's encouragement, I acknowledged that God was actively calling me to ministry.

My time at Union Presbyterian Seminary has been among the most formative of my life. For almost two years now I have learned about ministry, but more than that I have learned about myself. I am encouraged and challenged by classes, chapel services, and discussions with classmates and faculty. I see God's gracious love in the beauty and struggle that is constantly around us. Although I entered seminary uncertain of just what God had in store for me, in recent months it is becoming more clear that God desires me in a pastoral care ministry, likely as an installed pastor.

My journey of faith has been one of highs and lows, with plenty of twists and turns. Through it all, God has been guiding and shaping the course of my life. Although I couldn't always recognize or acknowledge God's influence, in hindsight I can see it clearly. Through good and bad, God has used my circumstances, my doubts, and my stubbornness for the better.

# CPM ATTACHMENT 2

Rebecca Heilman

Faith Journey

To the members of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina:

Saint Esprit, viens dans nos ames produire une vive foi. Remplis de tes saintes flammes, Ceux qui n'esperent qu'en toi – "Holy Spirit come and fill us, make our faith alive and true. Fill those with your flames most Holy, who have only hope in you." This is the first line of a traditional French Hymn often sung in my church, Waldensian Presbyterian Church in Valdese North Carolina. It is ingrained in my head, my soul, and my being because of my deep roots in the French – Italian heritage. I was baptized, like my father, my grandmother, and my great grandfather in Waldensian Presbyterian Church, whose heritage is of the Waldensian decent – French - Italian "protestants" who were persecuted by the Catholics in the 13<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. I grew up learning about the Waldenses, wearing their traditional clothing, eating the traditional food, and singing our French hymns, that speak of grace, praise, hope, presence, and comfort for and from God. Waldensian Presbyterian Church instilled these traits and beliefs within me, which is part of the reason I am here today.

I grew up going to Sunday School followed by Worship every Sunday. And because church was normalized and was a routine, God and Jesus were always there. I grew up learning the faithful stories, the history, and reciting the Lord's prayer and other important liturgy. I remember sitting with my Dad, as my Mom sang in the choir, listening and learning how to worship and sing those French hymns. My parents were living examples of faithful and active members of the church by their commitment to leadership. Or stepping outside of their comfort zones to help with local mission opportunities. My Mom took me to as many of these mission opportunities as she could. I was raised around helpers and morally sound parents, which is what I remember most as a child and how it shaped my faith formation.

Furthermore, I distinctly remember 7<sup>th</sup> grade, as most people do, since those were the years of formation and change! 7<sup>th</sup> grade is when I truly understood the meaning of faith and reflected on what my church had taught me throughout my childhood years. It was after my confirmation, at the Massanetta middle school conference, that I felt God, saw God, and understood that I've chosen to have faith in God and Jesus Christ. After this experience, I became more interested in Christianity, our denomination and teachings, as well as developing and understanding my own beliefs, with the help of my youth minister and youth leaders.

It was the summer before my first year of high school that a whole other world was open to me. I traveled to Monterrey, Mexico with my church for my first international mission trip. I had some experience in small local community outreaches in Valdese, but never anything as big as traveling out of the country. It was on this trip, that I fell in love with service, being with people of a different context and culture, traveling outside of my comfort zone, learning a different language, accepting a challenge, and discovering what it means to be a helper. While on this trip, I fell in love, first, with traveling and second, to international service. These two loves eventually flipped with more experience. However, that trip to Mexico, is when a seed was planted and I began grow.

My love of service continued in High School through several Girls Scout projects. However, in my senior year of high school, I attended a planning meeting for a medical group traveling to Uganda. After this meeting my love and inspiration for international service rekindled, and traveling to an African nation became a dream. Looking back, God was speaking to me, pushing me in the small of my back, and directing a path that required faith. In fact, God was practically yelling at me to go! So after my first

year of college, my sister and I traveled with a group from our presbytery to Malawi, Africa, where my life changed and my call to ministry began. Each summer in college, I traveled back to Malawi with the presbytery group. I remember going each time and longing to do, do, do! However, I slowly learned what it meant to be present and to be a presence. Each summer I did not do much. I might have organized a closet or painted a building, but that was insignificant compared to the people I met, created relationships with, and learned about a culture and society completely different from mine. Malawi is where I saw and felt God most. Furthermore, Malawi directed me at Presbyterian College, to seek a degree in International Studies and Christian Education.

My Christian Education professor, Rev. Dr. Becky Davis, opened new passions within me, like social justice, advocacy, awareness, theology, and practical ministry. Christian Education gave me a future to live out a life of goodness and faith. It exposed a world of justice and God's Biblical mandate for Christians to seek liberation for the oppressed and the dehumanized. This is an understanding of Christianity that I was rarely exposed to, but realized I deeply desired in my life. I had never given seminary a thought, until Becky Davis revealed that my ethical beliefs aligned biblically to God's teachings and that seminary will help me gain the theology, practicality, and confidence in seeking God's call in my life. Therefore, my Christian Education degree, along with my travels to Malawi, directed me to Zambia and seminary to follow.

In my final year of college, I decided to apply to both seminary and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A Young Adult Volunteer program (YAV). I wasn't ready to go back into school and I felt that God wanted me to continue to explore the idea of intentional and international service. I chose to do a YAV year and was accepted into the Zambia, Africa site placement. If my time in Malawi had an impact on my life, it is nothing compared to how Zambia influenced my personal growth and development as basic human being, as well as a faithful follower of Christ. While in Zambia, I lived with a Zambian host family in a small impoverished suburban and "ghetto" like neighborhood in the capital city of Lusaka. Throughout the year, I taught grade 5 and grade 6 in a classroom of 45 students at a local community school with hardly any resources. I was challenged and completely pushed out of my western comfort zone. I learned how to teach creatively, live simply, and be loved and accepted (and to give love and acceptance) to a community living in a completely different context from my own. Zambia exposed my privilege and truly taught me the importance of living in community. I was struck by God's endless grace and the powerful presence of God in a world where relief was desperately needed. God appeared in moments when I least expected it. And no doubt, God taught me about solidarity, empathy, willingness, adventure, and faith. God exposed relationships of respect, trust, and love that crossed major cultural boundaries, something that seemed impossible at the time. I lived in prayer while in Zambia, some days were easy and others more difficult, but overall, I felt God grounding and humbling me through faith and by simply, letting go.

After my YAV year in Zambia, my endless and turning road of faith led me to Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA. I'm in my second year and my mind is exposed and aware, stretched, and in constant learning mode. My professors and fellow students push me to think more critically and to search deeper for truths, even when those truths can be endless or interpreted differently. Those beautiful Biblical interpretation "aha" moments, mostly given by my professor, Rev. Dr. Frances Taylor Gench, seem like God's voice in my ear telling me that God is more than I understand and more than I will ever know. And each day, even as I sit through my lectures and sections, I know that I am supposed to be here, in seminary, learning about God as Creator, God as a Justice – Seeker, and God as Sustainer so that I can pass the knowledge and faith forward. While at seminary, I am reminded that God is with me, that the Holy Spirit lives within me, and Jesus Christ walks along side me so that I am able to

Rebecca Heilman  
Faith Journey

recognize my baptismal vows and feel the nourishment and rejuvenation of the bread and wine. And even when I'm struggling through a Hebrew or Greek translation or spending long hours, along with my friends, in the library for history test, my stretched mind is still reminded of God's grace, presence, and call on my life for service.

Peace,  
Rebecca Heilman