

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
THE REVEREND DWIGHT CHRISTENBURY, CHAIR
OCTOBER 26, 2021**

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

- I. THAT** Lyndsay Beaulieu, a member of Morganton First Presbyterian Church and a student at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina be enrolled as a Candidate following the required examination by Presbytery.

Recently, your Committee on Preparation for Ministry conducted an interview with an Inquirer who asked, with the support of their sponsoring congregation and Session, that they be enrolled as Candidates in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. We recommend her to you today for your approval.

Lyndsay Beaulieu comes with the support of her congregation and the recommendation of the Session of Morganton First Presbyterian Church. Her written call to ministry/faith statement is contained in this packet (see CPM Attachment 1).

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.

II. THAT Will Upchurch, Commissioned Pastor at Long Creek Presbyterian Church and Candidate under the care of PWNC, be exempted from presbytery's requirement for one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), prior to being certified ready to receive a call. (3/4 vote of presbytery required)

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina has a number of special requirements that are in addition to those outlined in the *Book of Order* (G-2.06). Among these is the requirement for one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Having completed all the requirements of both G-2.06 and PWNC's special requirements, save one unit of CPE, the Committee on Ministry believes that waiving this requirement in the case of Will Upchurch is appropriate.

In particular, Will has a medical condition that has made it virtually impossible for him to arrange a unit of CPE compatible with his schedule and health challenges. After due consultation the Committee on Ministry believes that in the light of Will's ministry and counseling experience both within and outside the church, coupled with his health challenges, it is fitting for PWNC to waive this requirement. This will allow him to be certified ready to receive a call and open a path, pending subsequent action by presbytery and the congregation, to be ordained and installed as designated pastor of Long Creek Presbyterian Church where he currently serves as Commission Pastor.

Because waivers to requirements in the *Book of Order* require a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of presbytery, it is judged appropriate that PWNC approve this recommendation waiving one of its own requirements by the same $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- Maxwell Michaels, a member of the New Hope Presbyterian Church, Gastonia, was certified ready to receive a call on January 18, 2023.

CPM ATTACHMENT 1

Lyndsay Beaulieu
Statement of Call

Dear Members of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina,

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my journey with you. Over the past few years, I have seen God move in ways I never thought possible. New doors have opened, and I stepped through them in faith. I am excited to see how God will continue leading in this next phase of my ministry.

I was raised in a conservative Southern Baptist church. My family attended every time the doors were open, but life at home was very different from the picture painted to the outside world. My world was filled with addiction and abuse. Seeing God as a loving father was difficult when my experiences with father figures were anything but loving.

As a teenager, I tried nearly everything to numb my pain. My poor choices would lead to many years of regret and shame. When I was 18, I found the love and stability I had been missing when I met my husband, a Marine. I cleaned up my life, and we married quickly. He was raised Catholic but not practicing, so we didn't attend church during this season of life.

When we had our first daughter, I started feeling a divine nudge. I wanted her to have the community and faith foundations instilled in me as a child. Our family struggled to find the right fit, but as we moved across the country with the military, our family typically worshipped in non-denominational and Baptist congregations. My children have all been baptized; faith is a big part of our family dynamic.

When my husband's military service ended, we settled in Valdese, NC, close to family. We joined a Baptist church and soon after jumped into service. I accepted a job at First Presbyterian Church in Morganton, NC, where I immediately felt welcomed by the people in the congregation. It felt as if I had two faith communities.

As my role at FPC grew, I increasingly assumed leadership responsibilities within the church. As part of my job, I often spoke in front of the congregation, and given my previous work experience, I often worked with staff and volunteers to plan and execute ministry events. This is where I thrived and felt God's calling more steadily as time progressed.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I took over video editing for our online worship service. As I listened to my pastor week after week, I heard a theme emerging. He taught about grace in a way that I had never heard before. I knew grace was one of the foundations of my faith, but I had never felt it so tangibly.

It was freeing to finally be myself and realize that I was created exactly the way God intended. I was meant to be a leader of God's people. Once I embraced that calling, I began exploring

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opportunities to teach and serve at my Baptist church. Given the values of the evangelical tradition, it became apparent that a leadership role was not an option available to me. After much prayer, I moved my membership to FPC Morganton and was warmly welcomed by the congregation as one of their own.

I enrolled in Union Presbyterian Seminary in August 2021 and immediately knew I was meant to be there. I feel more confident each semester that God is calling me to full-time congregational ministry. At the same time, I hold my journey with open hands, knowing God has the perfect path in mind.

I have experienced tremendous personal and spiritual growth throughout my journey, and there is still more work to complete. As a current CPE student, I am learning to be present even in the grief, joy, sorrow, and sadness of life. I look forward to watching God's plan unfold, and I am thankful to have the support of my pastor and mentors, the congregation of FPCM, and the PWNC as my story continues.

With blessings,

Lyndsay Beaulieu