

Report of
COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
to
Transylvania Presbytery
December 5, 2009

1. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry reports that annual consultations have been conducted for the following Inquirers:

Sarah Dill
Emily Boyce
Hannah McIntyre
Monica Tillie

The committee determined to continue their status as Inquirers for the coming year.

2. The committee recommends to the presbytery that Inquirer Wanda Olive be received as a Candidate for ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament. (see attached biographical summary and Statement of Faith).
3. The committee shares with the presbytery an ongoing concern about the financial indebtedness incurred by our candidates in the process of their seminary education and the limitation that debt imposes on their consideration of a first call. In order to repay their educational debt, many candidates are able to accept calls only from churches who pay salaries in a sufficient amount to allow them to support themselves and their family as well as make regular payment on the debt. The committee encourages churches that endorse candidates from among their members to be as generous as possible with financial support for these students.
4. The committee reminds all our churches that when a new pastor is installed in any church it is a policy of Transylvania Presbytery that an offering be received to be used by the committee for the financial support of our inquirers and candidates. Such offerings should be remitted to the presbytery office.

Wanda B. Olive – Biographical Statement for Transylvania Presbytery

I am a native Kentuckian, born in Winchester and raised in Lexington. I grew up in the Southern Baptist denomination. Though this was a primarily Caucasian congregation, the church took a stand, in the 1960's, to open membership to African-Americans. We became a culturally diverse congregation with additional outreach and ministry to the inner-city of Lexington. The church was a place of welcome, a place full of fellowship, a place where the men cranked homemade ice cream to compete for the best prize, a place where there was Vacation Bible School, a place with a traveling Contemporary Youth Choir. Young and elderly, black and white, rich and poor, persons from all across Lexington came together there to worship the living God and to follow Jesus.

Though our building was destroyed by arsonists, our worship of God was not destroyed. We went right on. Each of us took on new responsibilities in order to continue being the church. I can remember assisting on Sundays to set up the folding chairs for worship. Not long after we began worship in a Middle School, our Youth Choir Director helped us to put together the dramatic presentation of the "Jesus Christ, Superstar!" musical. I am still reminded how powerful that message was for us set in the context of our time. Christ's life and suffering took on a very personal meaning.

After a fifteen year absence from the church, I married Jim Olive and joined First Presbyterian Church in Middlesboro, Kentucky where Jim was an Elder. I asked God what work I was to do and to put me where I was needed. I became a volunteer with the Cooperative Christian Ministry (CCM) in Middlesboro. My prayer life, volunteer work, and connections within the League of Women Voters opened doors to unique opportunities to work with young people. Eventually I took a staff position in Pineville, Kentucky, which led to our transfer back to Central Kentucky. The guidance of the Holy Spirit led us to membership in Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church. Throughout the years, I have served in Sunday School, Presbyterian Women, Youth Groups, Deacons, Session and as Clerk of Session. My faith has grown through serving and leading in Worship.

I seek God's help and the power to discern God's will for my life in every decision that is placed before me. Open and continuous prayer has been the guidance in which I have learned to know, love, and serve God. Prayer has helped me to learn to act as God's agent in the world, sending and receiving love. Through prayer I have learned to worship God and follow Jesus using my God-given abilities to serve through the church.

In addition to prayer, I journal as a form of spiritual discipline. It was through this method that I discovered the path of God's leading. Although I do not write every day, I do try to record events, activities, and concerns. Over the years, I have become aware of the patterns of my life and of God's abiding presence.

My call into ministry came long before I was willing to acknowledge it. Throughout the years, practice in various ministry capacities provided affirmation of my talents. I have grown in faith that God is with me in this process toward ordination. With God's ever abiding presence, I will go wherever I am called.

After completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies with Leadership emphasis and a minor in Philosophy in May 2004, I followed the call to Seminary. I completed one year of studies at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary then transferred to Lexington Theological Seminary in the Fall of 2005. I live in Lexington with my husband of twenty-two years, Jim Olive, and our teenage daughter, Sarah. I bring a lifetime of work experience to ministry including sales and marketing, teaching, community service, and numerous church related activities. Most recently I served as Seminary Associate at Versailles Presbyterian Church which included, but was not limited to, leading both High School and Middle School Mission Trips.

Wanda B. Olive
Statement of Faith
November 2009

I believe in the One true God, the God of Israel, who is revealed through Scripture and the life of Jesus Christ, as present to people of faith throughout time. I believe that God is relational as revealed in the three persons of the Trinity – God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. God is the source of all being, the creator of all that is, and redeemer of all. I acknowledge that Scripture is the written testimony to the Lord our God, to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ, and to the guidance given by the Holy Spirit.

When I think of the incarnation, I think of God's on-going creation. I believe in Jesus, Son of God, speaker of truth and mystery. He ate with sinners, stood up for the weak and persecuted and called all of his followers to deny their selfish ambitions. The place and work of Christ's life, death, and resurrection in the Gospel reveals who God is. I am called by Jesus to a life of faith and discipleship. What Jesus did, we are called to do: to love God and neighbor and to live in community with each other. Jesus Christ called attention to what God's Word is calling the community to be and to do.

I believe that the Holy Spirit reveals our work in the world and links us to the love of God. The basis of my faith depends on the assurance of God's presence, wisdom, and power revealed through the Holy Spirit. I believe that the Holy Spirit is the ongoing presence of God that enables us as Christians in our faith, worship, witness, and service.

I believe that Scripture is the revealed and inspired Word of God, the rule of my faith and life. Scripture reveals to me that God's presence is not static, but is dynamic. Scripture reveals God's covenant for all time. God is with us as witnessed through Jesus' total devotion to God.

I think that the Biblical narrative helps us to view humanity at its best and at its worst. It provides examples of how we are to live. Human beings have the capacity to choose between goodness and evil, in conflict or in harmony. I acknowledge God's covenant of grace; a free gift that is unearned. I seek God's guidance to live toward God's purposes and the highest good.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I am called to service, witnessing to God's acts of salvation and grace. By faith God has been revealed in history and continues to be revealed. As H. Richard Niebuhr writes, God is revealed to us "in the moment in our history through which we know ourselves to be known." I believe that we are never alone – God is always here. The living Christ would have us do no less than to walk arm-in-arm with our sisters and brothers.