

Committee on Preparation for Ministry Report
September 9, 2008

1. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends that the Presbytery of Transylvania sustain the Ordination Examination of Amy Dame and that she be approved for ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Amy has received a call as Associate Pastor to the First Presbyterian Church in Hutchinson, Kansas, a congregation in the Presbytery of Southern Kansas. Amy is currently a candidate under care of the Transylvania Presbytery and is a member of Beaumont Presbyterian Church.
2. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends that the Presbytery of Transylvania sustain the Ordination Examination of Pete Jones and that he be approved for ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Pete has received a call as Executive Camp Director of Burnamwood Camp & Conference Center.

Spiritual Autobiography

Amy Dame

Church has always been a central part of my life. That was important growing up, as my family moved around more than most. I have now lived in Maryland, California, Texas, Kentucky, Indiana, Belgium, and New Jersey. Upon arriving in each location, one of the first tasks was to find a new community of faith. As a result church has been a constant place in my life where I feel at home. The Presbyterian Church in particular, feels like home for me too. I was baptized Presbyterian as an infant, and though I explored with different denominations in college, I continue to feel that this denomination is where I fit. I sincerely believe the Presbyterian Church can help me be the best pastor that I am able to be.

During my freshman year of high school, my family moved to Lexington, Kentucky. We soon joined Beaumont Presbyterian Church, and this is the congregation that I still describe as my “home church.” Most people at Beaumont knew I was headed toward ministry long before I did, and they—along with my family—deserve a lot of credit for encouraging me along the way. Three years later I headed to Hanover College and decided to major in theology; talking about God all day sounded like fun. But theology was more than that. My professors taught me how to go beyond the surface discussions, to think critically about my faith, and to understand what I believed and why I believed it. I was challenged daily, and my faith continued to grow.

In college I also worked with a vocational mentor who helped me think about what came next and where God was leading me. Mostly, he listened to me as I stumbled through the process of learning to listen to God. Under the guidance of college chaplains I began spending my summers as a church intern, first in South Dakota, and later in Kentucky. My initial experience was a little scary; I was awed by all that I saw pastors doing, and I wondered whether I would ever be able to do the same. But my mentors did not give up on me, so I did not give up either. As I grew I began to recognize my own strengths, and I discovered some of the unique ways I might serve the Church and respond to God’s call.

There are a number of reasons that I chose to attend Princeton Theological Seminary after graduating from Hanover. I was encouraged by the dual focus on strong academics and faithful preparation for ministry. I also liked the professors and the students, and it did not hurt that the seminary was Presbyterian. I am incredibly grateful for the three years that I was able to spend at Princeton. I was humbled by the opportunity to study with amazing scholars and by everything I learned from the incredible men and women who were my classmates. I was blessed with a year-long internship in a congregation that allowed me to try out every aspect of the church’s ministry and to learn which areas in particular I could best serve. In seminary I discovered a love of preaching, a passion for pastoral care, and a particular affinity for spending time with middle school students. I also spent the requisite summer as a hospital chaplain, working at two hospitals in Indianapolis. There I was broken and reshaped a number of times, but I came out a stronger person. I experienced the privilege of representing God’s love to people in the depths of pain and suffering, and I discovered that by God’s grace I am capable of facing situations I would never be able to handle alone.

I know that I am still have much to learn and many things to experience. I am still growing in my faith and working to improve my own relationship with God, and I expect that will always be true. But I am confident that there is a reason God has brought me here. And I am confident that it is God who brought me here – through laughter and tears, challenges and lessons... and incredible moments of joy.

Statement of Faith

Amy Dame

I believe that God is love. I believe in the Triune God, one God in three persons.

I believe in God, whom Jesus called Abba Father, the Creator of all things, from least to greatest, both seen and unseen. I believe that God is a personal God, present with wisdom and love in the life of every creature, and that God rules over all of creation with omnipotent and omniscient providence.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the incarnation of God's Word, by whom God reveals God's self to us. I believe that fully human, Christ walked among us; yet fully divine, Christ triumphed over the sins of the world. For our sake he was crucified and died. It was the ultimate sacrifice, and the atoning sacrifice. I believe in the bodily resurrection on the third day, when Christ rose to reign as King alongside God the Creator. I believe that we are therefore a forgiven people, justified by grace through our faith in the redemptive work of Christ.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the living presence of God in the world; by the Spirit we are sustained and guided. I believe that the Holy Spirit inspires and drives the process of sanctification, by which we are released from the power of sin and brought into communion with the Triune God and with all believers.

I believe that the sacrament of Baptism is a sign and seal of the saving grace which God has promised to God's people. I believe that baptism is not an act by which we earn grace, but is an act which bears witness to the truth that God's love holds a claim on our lives. In baptism we are engrafted into the body of Christ. The waters of baptism are the same as the waters of creation and the waters of the history of God's people. When we baptize in the name of the Triune God we bear witness that, in God, we all are one.

I believe that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a sign and seal of the redemptive grace offered in Christ's salvific self-sacrifice. I believe that the bread is symbolic of Christ's body and the fruit of the vine is symbolic of Christ's blood—both were given freely for our sake. In partaking of the bread and the cup we reaffirm our faith in God's promise of salvation.

I believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is a body of believers whose mission and task it is to be God's workers in the world. In faith, we recognize the image of God in every person, and seek to welcome all people into the communion of saints and the Church Universal. I trust in the promise of eternal life and in the fulfillment of all of God's promises for God's people. I trust in the eschatological hope that Christ will come again and will reign over the earth for all time.

Spiritual Autobiography **Peter David Jones (Pete)**

I was born in Doylestown, Pa. on November 15th, 1979. I was baptized soon after in the Doylestown Presbyterian Church where my father was under care. The most formative part of my life is my family; then and now.

Then, I was the baby of four children, all of us within five years of each other (in some ways I still am). My oldest sister was the brain, my brother was the athlete, my sister closest to my age was the pretty one, and I was *simply Pete*. My mother was a high school English teacher, while my father was just beginning as a Presbyterian minister. The closeness of my family, then, deeply affected my theology of community. Life is simply more fun with others, more meaningful in the reciprocating banter of sibling life, and more fulfilling in the shadow of incredible role models.

When I was in the fourth grade, my parents brought my siblings and me to Kentucky, to Maxwell Street. In that congregation, I once again found a family that would sustain me through the turbulent teenage years. This is also the family that introduced me to Burnamwood. Burnamwood is the place where I first began to formulate the language for the blessings I inwardly knew. The friends I made at Burnamwood astounded me. I was shocked to see teenagers overwhelmed to the point of tears as they first encountered the love of Christ in that place.

Now, my family continues to be important, yet so different. My siblings are all married with children, my mother is retired, and my father continues his incredible career in a church near Pittsburgh. I am also married, not surprisingly to a school teacher. I have three daughters, who light up my life every time they smile.

As I write this, I am aware that I have not used any theological language and for a Spiritual autobiography, that might seem strange. However, it is the very absence of such language that so strongly attests to the importance of family in my life. Family, to me, is Spiritual. We are called by Christ to be a family for each other, not just our relatives, but for all people. This calling and the blessings of my many families, then and now, form my theology of community.

My call to seminary came from the most unexpected person. One day, my wife simply said, "it's time to go to seminary now." That unexpected calling led me back to a full-time role at Maxwell Street, working with children and youth. The surprisingly fulfilling nature of that role has only served to confirm my belief that God is real, that the love of Christ continues to surprise us at every turn, and the community of God's people is a phenomenal power.

One page is nowhere near enough space to give credit to the significant stops along my Spiritual path. Being *simply Pete* no longer means the youngest of four. I am a father of three, a loving husband, a youth director and children's minister, and a camp director. I am convinced that all of this is by the grace of God, shown to me by the love of many families and a personal relationship with God.

Statement of Faith
Peter David Jones

I believe in the one triune God: Creator of all that is; incarnated in Jesus the eternal Christ; and through the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

I believe that God desires to be in community with us and calls us into a covenantal relationship as described in Scripture.

I believe that God alone is sovereign and offers grace through Christ and inspiration through the Spirit. Our response to this gift as Christians is to embrace faith, a gift also given by God.

I believe our lives are bound together in the holy catholic Church, the one body of Christ.

I believe in the power of the Holy Sacraments, Communion and Baptism, as visible signs of invisible grace.

I believe that God nurtures us through the Lord's Supper and claims us in Baptism.

I believe Scripture reveals the will of God and calls us to serve God by living in obedience and by seeking justice in this world.

I believe that God's goodness is revealed in the beauty of creation and the laughter of children.

I believe in the power of prayer and the promise of God to sustain us in our Christian vocation.