

Committee on Preparation for Ministry  
December 6, 2008  
Report to the Presbytery of Transylvania

1. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends to the Presbytery of Transylvania that Julie Maggard be enrolled as an Inquirer for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Julie is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Ashland.
2. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry reports to the Presbytery of Transylvania that it has met with the following inquirers and candidates since the September Presbytery meeting:

Emily Boyce, Mt. Sterling	Greg Kubar, Maxwell St.
Pam Lee-Miller, Maxwell St.	Julie Maggard, Ashland
Hannah McIntyre, Troy	Jack Mong, Somerset
Dan Phelps, Wilmore	Chad Rhodes, Troy
3. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry reports that we have conducted a final assessment with the following candidates and that they are ready to receive a call to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament:

Jack Mong, Somerset
Dan Phelps, Wilmore
Greg Kubar, Maxwell St.
4. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends that the Presbytery of Transylvania sustain the Ordination Examination of Stephanie Wing and that she be approved for ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Stephanie has received a call as Co-Pastor to the First Presbyterian Church of Harrodsburg. Stephanie comes to us from Abingdon Presbytery.
5. The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends that the Presbytery of Transylvania sustain the Ordination Examination of Andy Wing and that he be approved for ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Andy has received a call as Co-Pastor to the First Presbyterian Church of Harrodsburg. Andy comes to us from Abingdon Presbytery.

It is impossible for me to reflect upon any sort of spiritual autobiography without first looking at my family background. My dad is a minister, and his dad was a minister. My dad's only brother is a minister, and his kids all appear to be headed that way, too. In short, in my family of origin, Christian faith has been firmly at the center of our lives. When I was 7, our family joined the PC (USA). We went to an evangelical PC USA church in Durham, and it was this church that played the biggest role outside from my family in nurturing my faith. I was very active in the church, through the Youth Group and through any sort of leadership I could take on with the children in the church.

Just before I started high school, we moved to rural Virginia, where my dad accepted a call to pastor a church. My sister and I experienced culture shock with the move, but the most difficult transition for us was at church. The High School Sunday School class didn't have a regular teacher, and "discussion" consisted of reading the Bible verse and answering fill-in-the-blank questions from the reading. The Youth Group was very cliquey, and didn't have a feeling of great spiritual health. Eventually my sister and I stopped going to both.

We hadn't quite been in Virginia for a year when my mom announced she was leaving our family. It was devastating in ways I couldn't begin to realize at the time. Though my dad continued to have a profound influence on my life during this time, I lacked external outlets for Christian nurture and support. My negative experiences with the Youth Group helped to sharpen my judgment against the church, and my natural tendency to question things combined with that to create cynicism rather than faith development. In college, I minored in Religious Studies, and primarily studied Christianity. I moved from a life of faith to a religion of intellect. I distanced myself from any personal walk with God, but kept myself from feeling too "guilty" about it by continuing to study the subject.

After graduation I took a job working with a nonprofit organization. I had a sense of mission in what I was doing, but there was still a void. It was easy not to go to church – no one I worked with did, and I was working so many hours per week that I easily excused myself if I had weekends free. After two years I moved to Boston, and while my Dad was visiting, we went to visit the historic Park Street Church. During the service, something clicked – it felt like a home that I had been trying to find for many years. It was apparent to me that God had never stopped working on me, even if I had been ignoring that work. I became very active in the church, joining and then leading a small group, and the whole balance of my life and priorities began to change. My work, which was stimulating, challenging, and rewarding, was also all-consuming. There was much I loved about it, but I also started to feel a sense of agitation, that something wasn't quite *right*. I finally started considering a career change.

I hadn't ever really thought about the ministry growing up, but that now kept coming into my head. Friends and family confirmed this direction. I initially resisted, but then decided to at least look at MDiv programs to see if the sense of call sharpened. As I sorted through different schools, nothing seemed to click until I looked at Louisville Seminary. It was far off my radar screen, but there was a stirring inside that demanded a closer look. Finally, after prayer, discernment, and discussion, I felt a call to enroll there, to see where God might lead me.

It was a place of growth and testing, but I also continued to have undeniable confirmation that it was where God had brought me. My ministry experiences were formational, as was my participation in the life of the Seminary. My friendships with classmates and interactions with faculty, administrators, and ministry supervisors were instrumental in my vocational formation and spiritual development. Over the past few years, I have seen even more clearly how God has been guiding each step in this long and winding road. Further evidence of God's guidance came in the chance meeting over dinner of my future husband. Though we were both under care of the same small Presbytery, it took a national gathering of the Company of New Pastors to bring us together. Of all the "clicks" in my journey, it was the most clear, and soon we began to make plans to join our lives and ministries together. It is with great excitement to see what God has in store that we find ourselves now, ready to take the next steps in our journey through ordination and service as Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

Stephanie Wing  
Statement of Faith

I believe in God, our Father, creator of everything. My mind cannot comprehend the vastness of the known universe, much less that which is unknown. It is utterly ineffable. Much more ineffable is any complete comprehension of God, who created all of this, and so much more, yet who remains intimately involved with his creation. God is a loving creator – present at all times, in all places, knowing all and loving each of us beyond our comprehension. God's love for us is beyond measure.

Though God's creation was good, humanity has radically separated itself from its creator. We are created in God's image, and we are called to love God with all of our hearts, minds, and spirits, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have not done that. Through our actions, inactions, words, and thoughts, we have failed to worship God alone, and we have failed to love and care for all of God's creation. We are truly a stiff-necked people, relying on our own accomplishments, turning away from God and towards false worship, and ignoring the image of God in others, in the way we treat individuals and in the systems in which we are participants. The wages of our sin is death and destruction, yet in our stubbornness we have denied our need for salvation, or denied our utter dependence on God for that salvation.

God's great justice requires that no transgression is without consequent. God's great compassion desires that all of creation be reconciled to him. God's great mercy came down and took human form so that all of humanity could be justified before God. God sent Christ, the eternal Word of God, to become flesh, to become fully human in the person of Jesus Christ, so that all of creation could be reconciled to God. Jesus' ministry on earth was a ministry of reconciliation. Jesus' life and teaching call us to be reconciled to God and to each other. Jesus' death is efficient for the salvation of all. In Jesus, the Word of God became flesh. The full humanity of Jesus, taken on fully by the divine, was necessary for the salvation of humanity.

When Jesus died, the body was dead, buried, and resurrected from the grave. Christ, the eternal Word of God, continues to live forever, at the right hand of God the Father. God's work on earth didn't end at creation, and Christ's work of salvation didn't end at the resurrection. The eternal Holy Spirit has always been working through God's creation. The Holy Spirit was sent to be Counselor, to continue to abide and work in God's creation. The Holy Spirit continues to work in us today, to write God's truth upon our hearts, to guide and to comfort, to work in our lives and in the world. The Spirit writes the Word upon our hearts, lifts us in Joy, comforts us in pain, and groans with us as we move towards our return to the Maker. The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are visible signs of God's eternal and invisible grace at work in our lives, claiming us and sustaining us as we live out our calling in Christ.

I believe in the unity of the Trinity – God, Creator of all things, Christ, the eternal Word of God, and the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life. I believe that all people are created equally in God's image, and that truth has significant implications. We are called to love each other, individually and corporately. We are called to reach out to all populations and respond in love to all peoples. We are called away from indifference or self-imposed ignorance towards injustices at all levels. We are called to love the Lord our God completely, turning away from all other forms of false worship. I believe that the church is the Body of Christ on earth. Christ has no hands but ours, no feet but ours, no mouths but ours. We must reach out, go out, and speak out as Christ's Body – as a community of believers. We must continue to pray to God, to ground ourselves in the Word of God, and to seek and be receptive to the guidance of the Spirit, working here on earth for the kingdom of God.

I was born in Jackson, Mississippi while my Dad was still in Seminary. When the doctors handed me as a newborn baby to my dad, he received me, held me up in dedication and said, “Lord, this child belongs to you.” He meant what he said. My parents had wanted a family and by having me as their child, they had new roles before the face of God. My parents had always been part of the Christian community. For them, my baptism meant bringing me into this community and making me aware of God’s presence. My parents describe my baptism as an emotional time for them as they acknowledged that I should be part of this community.

From the time I was born and baptized, my parents took me to church. I knew and considered these church people to be the most significant in my life. Until I attended school, I only knew my parents, grandparents, neighbors, and the church family. I believe this is significant because experience was that God was always present everywhere I went. As a child, I knew God was with me. I will never remember how it was that I learned to pray, or how I came to believe in Jesus as my savior, but I know that it was the result of my family and the church fulfilling their responsibility of Christian nurture.

My faith has been central in my life since my birth. My friendships were also an important aspect of my spiritual growth. I have constantly shared with people the deepest places in their lives. I had friends I could pray with in high school. In high school my friend Eddie and I both chose Christian colleges because we wanted our faith and studies to be integrated. I was certain I was making a good choice in choosing the PC (USA) affiliated school Montreat College, when one of the entrance essays asked how I thought faith and studies were connected. I had a close friend in college who nurtured me in my Christian faith and understanding of God. Wherever I have been and worked from the classroom, dorm-room, or retail job, I found that I was often a pastor to classmates, friends, co-workers, and others. I was encouraged to consider ministry, and I looked at Columbia Seminary after I graduated from Montreat. Still, it was three years before I finally followed these urgings and enrolled in the MDiv program.

My interest in studying the Bible and theology was always strong, and I was excited to continue that study in more depth in Seminary. I learned many new things in Seminary, but most importantly I learned that I needed to do more than just study. I found that my course work was taking priority in my schedule, and I was missing things like chapel and coffee hour, Taize services at a nearby church, and volunteering with a Chinese Bible study for students from Georgia Tech. I came to recognize those things as being just as important as my studies.

My experiences with supervised ministry were also formative for my spiritual growth. Through my internships my call to ministry was confirmed internally and by those with whom I worked. In my year-long internship I learned more about balancing the demands of ministry with continued focus on spiritual practices. My supervisor observed the 7 hours of daily prayer, and I saw firsthand how important it was for his spiritual grounding. Seeing that, I applied to participate in the Company of New Pastors at Columbia, a national program run through the PC (USA) Office of Theology and Worship. Through this, I covenanted to daily prayer and readings from the Bible and from our Confessions.

It was at a national gathering with other Seminary students that I met my future wife. It wasn’t long after our first meeting that we were making plans to spend our lives together. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, we were married at Montreat College in a ceremony officiated jointly by our two fathers, both ordained PC (USA) ministers. Stephanie and I talked about our marriage as an expression of our discipleship, and as we discerned together our post-MDiv futures, we thought more and more about the possibility of serving together as co-pastors. We spoke with friends and family, and with other clergy couples. After much prayer and discernment, we decided to seek a call together. We look forward to seeing how God will use us as we start our ministry.

My personal faith leads me to have good hope for all people and an optimistic view of the world; a renewal of nature and culture in Jesus Christ. My outlook on what I see is positive because I believe God is in control of the world.

**God** God is triune. God is sovereign. God is the creator, redeemer, completer of that redemption of the world. I am a Christian within the Reformed tradition. My personal faith in God is informed and strengthened by scripture as it tells the story of our salvation from Old Testament to New Testament.

**Creation** God created the world good. Each person is made in the image of God and is inherently worthy of dignity, respect, and love. All of non-human creation is worthy of our care, as well.

**Fall/Sin** I believe and acknowledge that the world is fallen. As human beings we have a tremendous capacity to abuse this creation. The reality is that human beings have a tendency towards sin. As human beings we stand before God as both perpetrators and victims of sin. Sin runs through our hearts, dividing our hearts so that every human endeavor is touched by sin. Sin and evil is not God's intent for us. We long for the end of sin. Scripture expresses that "all of creation cries out to God" longing for the restoration of God's intended creation.

**Redemption from Sin** God provides for the fallen world by giving of himself and sending his only son Jesus Christ into the world for the restoration of all creation, by dying on the cross and being raised. Jesus Christ's teachings touch our hearts and still give us words to cry out against injustice in the world. Christ's presence comforted his disciples and still comforts us. This redemption is not for human beings alone. All of creation has been touched by sin and all of creation has been touched by redemption. Jesus's life, death, resurrection, and ascension are redemptive and world-changing. Jesus Christ reigns with God and his ministry continues on earth. Before his death, Jesus promised the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit to fill us with life, to assure us of the love of God shown in Jesus Christ, and to empower us for the continuing work of ministry.

**The Church** We are united to Christ and the Father through the bond of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of this is the visible church, or the Body of Christ on earth. The church must witness to God's work in the world. When the word of God is proclaimed, it opens up in the faithful people zeal to worship God and to do God's will. Through the administration of the sacraments, the church acts to "seal on our consciences the promise of God's good will toward us in order to sustain us in the weakness of our faith."<sup>1</sup> In these physical sacraments, we spiritually share in Christ's death and resurrection. As Calvin says, the Holy Spirit lifts our hearts up into the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. The Holy Spirit also guides the church with gifts of the Spirit and enriches the church and world through the fruits of the Spirit. In this way, God also equips and use the visible church to serve the kingdom.

**Final Fulfillment of our Redemption from Sin** We live in a time when we celebrate that Jesus has died for our redemption, but we still long for a sinless world. We long for a time when God in Jesus Christ will bring the redemption to completion by bringing the kingdom of God in its fullness. For now, we struggle with principalities and powers, with sin, with an ecosystem that is hurt by our decisions and actions. Theologians express this time as the Now and the Not Yet. We live in the Now but long for the part of the kingdom that is Not Yet. In the time that is not Yet, Christ will come again and bring a new heaven and a new earth, creation will be completely restored. We have the image in our minds that this is like the lion laying down with the lamb. We live in a world of little peace and wait for a time of peace. We know that God will bring to completion the victory in Jesus Christ.

The gospel affects my life as it gives me compassion for people and nations. We have compassion for sinners. We take care of nature, our bodies, and culture because God created us to take care of creation. We engage culture because God created us to be in community with each other out of relationship to God. We expect that through the Holy Spirit, God will work in us to bring healing to a creation that cries out in anguish for restoration.

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin. Institutes of the Christian Religion. IV.14.1.