

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

PRESBYTERY OF THE JAMES

August 7, 2018

I. THE COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS

That the following persons be examined for ordination:

1. Candidate David Thomas Frost, Presbytery of the James, for ordination as Pastor of the Swift Creek Presbyterian Church, Swift Creek, VA.
2. Candidate Sandra Kay Goehring, Northern Plains Presbytery, for ordination as Pastor of the Louisa Presbyterian Church, Louisa, VA.
3. Candidate Alexander Fischer, Coastal Carolina Presbytery, for ordination as UKirk Pastor at Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA.
4. Candidate Lauren Elise Voyles, East Tennessee Presbytery, for ordination as a Second Year Resident at Mary Washington Hospital, Fredericksburg, VA.

1 **David Thomas Frost**

2
3 **Ecclesiastical Status:** PC(USA) Candidate

4 **Membership Presbytery:** Presbytery of the James

5 **Actively Seeking:** Open to receiving a call and moving within 9 months

6 **Formal Education:**

7 M. Div. Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA, 2018

8 B.A., Psychology and Religious Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015

9 **Position Types and Experience level:**

10 Solo Pastor, First Ordained Call

11 Head of Staff, First Ordained Call

12 **Leadership Competencies:**

13 Compassionate, Hopeful, Preaching and Worship Leadership, Spiritual Maturity, Public

14 Communicator, Advisor, Decision making, Interpersonal Engagement, Motivator, Flexibility

15 **Work Experience:**

16 2004-2017 Senior Project Manager, Bare International

17 2003-2004 Assistant Front Office Manager, Hyatt Regency

18 **Other Services to the Denomination:**

19 2017 Pulpit Supply

20 2017 Final Level Student Government Representative, Union Presbyterian Seminary

21 2014-2016 Deacon

22 2015-2016 Moderator of Deacons

23 2013-2017 Liturgist/Worship Leader

24 2012-2015 Usher

25
26 **Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.**

27 *“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15)*

28
29 Last summer, I served as a pulpit supply preacher for a congregation whose pastor died during the week
30 prior. The funeral was held at the church two days before I preached, so the congregation’s sense of loss
31 was still fresh. I was sensitive to their context and needs as I wrote the sermon and prepared to lead
32 worship.

33
34 The focus of my message was Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John. He says, “I will
35 not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you” (14:18). Even though Jesus was preparing the disciples for
36 his departure, he assures them they are not left alone or abandoned, even in a time of fear and change.
37 The aim of my message was to reassure the congregation that even during their own time of upheaval,
38 loss, and change, Jesus remains present with them through the Holy Spirit.

39
40 Before the service on Sunday, I introduced myself to members of the congregation, including the
41 pastor’s family who was in attendance. After the service concluded, the pastor’s widow invited me to
42 lunch in her home along with her son. Over a shared meal, I heard stories about their late husband and
43 father, his influence on their family, and his ministry in the church. It was a privilege to hear their
44 personal memories. Within the span of a few hours that Sunday, I provided care both in my role as a
45 preacher to the congregation, and then as a pastor to the family grieving a profound loss.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

Describe the ministry setting to which you believe God is calling you.

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’”(Genesis 12:1)

Preaching and worship is a passion of mine. God is calling me to a place where I can proclaim God’s word with enthusiasm, both for God’s work in the history of the world, and God’s work in our lives today. The Bible has real-world implications for us, so applying the scriptures to our modern context is an essential component of preaching. This happens not just through my words, but rather what the Spirit says and does through the Word.

I believe that biblical knowledge is important for a rich life of faith, not only for the preacher but also for the congregation. Therefore, worship is an experience through which the pastor teaches God’s word and equips the congregation for discipleship in their families, schools, and places of employment. My goal for worship on Sunday morning is that it would influence a person the other six days of the week.

Small group fellowship and Bible study promote spiritual growth. I believe God is calling me to a church that values family and relationships between families as we grow, love, and serve together. For me, ministry is relational. I sense God calling me to a place where I walk alongside members in times of joy, but also in times of sorrow. Through pastoral care and guidance, I hope to extend compassion and empathy in times of need, communicating hope for the future in Jesus Christ our Lord.

What areas of growth have you identified in yourself?

“Let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill” (Proverbs 1:5).

The clinical pastoral education internship I participated in during the summer of 2017 was a time of learning and growth. Soon after starting as a chaplain intern at McGuire Veterans Hospital, I recognized that I needed to grow in awareness of my emotions and the vocabulary I use to express them. By focusing on these areas, I was equipped to listen more effectively and provide better empathetic pastoral care to patients. I find life to be even more colorful and vibrant when we better communicate our emotions.

An expanded emotional vocabulary has not only aided my pastoral care, but also sermon preparation and delivery. My preaching has greater depth and relatability as I engage emotions in the biblical text, my own emotions, and the emotions of the congregation. Preaching is more relevant and applicable when it takes into account the feelings, passions, and outlook of the people. On a given Sunday, members of the congregation come to worship with a variety of emotions depending on the events of their lives, so I aim to consider the range of life experiences when developing a sermon.

Although I made significant strides in identifying and naming my emotions during my CPE internship, I continue to work on this area through additional study and practice in my everyday life.

Describe a time when you have led change.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...” (Matthew 25:35).

1
2 During my term as moderator of the Deacons in 2015-16, I identified a need for change in how member
3 care was extended through meals, particularly for families with an illness or recent loss of a loved one.
4 The church had existing member care groups that were organized geographically. Members were
5 assigned groups based on the neighborhood in which they lived. When a need arose, the member's
6 group was contacted by email and asked to sign up to prepare and deliver a meal.
7

8 Because the groups were organized by neighborhood rather than an interest in cooking, slots were often
9 left unfilled, meaning that the member care deacons had to scramble to prepare and deliver the meals
10 themselves. I proposed creating a Meals Team, made up of members with a specific gift for cooking.
11

12 After consulting the session, the congregation was presented with a Meals Team initiative. Members
13 with culinary gifts provided their email address to the deacons and were contacted for future member
14 care meal needs, regardless of their neighborhood. Subsequent meal request schedules were filled
15 quickly. The change I led matched the skills and abilities of certain members of the congregation with a
16 specific need in the church. The program was so successful that use of the Meals Team list was
17 expanded to include providing food for funeral receptions held at the church.
18

19 **Statement of Faith:**

20 The universe and all that fills it was called into existence by the word of God. Being created in God's
21 image, human beings were set apart as the pinnacle of God's creation. We are created by God and for
22 God's glory. And yet thoughts, words, and deeds that fall short of God's good purposes for our lives
23 distance us from our creator. This human condition of sinfulness is a predicament from which we cannot
24 extract ourselves.
25

26 In accordance with God's eternal plan, God came to earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who taught
27 us the greatest two commandments: to love God and love one another. Even though humankind
28 continued to transgress against the Almighty, God's sovereignty proved mightier than human sin when
29 Jesus chose death on the cross and was resurrected from the dead. Christ's atoning death and
30 resurrection free us from the bondage of sin, as he mediates on our behalf. God's grace is free, only
31 because the price was paid by Christ. Jesus does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
32

33 When Christ ascended to Heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within those who answer the
34 invitation to come and follow him. By the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, God continues to work
35 in this world, with Christ as head of the church. As the Scriptures are read and proclaimed during
36 worship, the Holy Spirit continues to speak with, and direct, God's people. As members of Christ's
37 church, we are called to testify to God's love, grace, and mercy, both in word and in action, to those in
38 need. The Great Commission charges the church to share the Gospel with all peoples and nations until
39 Christ returns, at which time he will judge the sins of the world, but also pardon those who look to him
40 for salvation.
41

42 I seek the One who first sought me. When I was baptized in to the Christian faith, I participated in the
43 new life that results after dying to sin. Being sealed with the Holy Spirit, I was adopted as a child of God
44 and welcomed into the church. During celebration of The Lord's Supper, we commune with the Lord
45 Jesus Christ, whose Spirit is present. As I share in the meal of bread and cup, I remember my baptism,
46 Christ's suffering and death upon the cross, and have hope for the day when Christ returns.
47

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

Sandra Kay Goehring

Ecclesiastical Status: PC(USA) Candidate

Membership Presbytery: Northern Plains Presbytery

Actively Seeking: Yes

Formal Education:

A.B.D. Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA

M.Div. Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ, 2008

B.A. in Religion Philosophy and English, Jamestown College (University of Jamestown), 1997

Continuing Education:

2015 “Love Endures: A Christian View of Human Worth and Dementia”

Position Types and Experience level:

Solo Pastor, First Ordained Call

Leadership Competencies:

Preaching and Worship Leadership, Lifelong Learner, Teacher, Communicator, Public Communicator, Contextualization, Collaboration, Interpersonal Engagement, Initiative, Flexibility

Work Experience:

2010-2015 Part-time Instructor in Religious Studies at Randolph-Macon College

2013 to Present Pulpit Supply, Adult Education Lenten Series Lecturer, and Women’s Retreat Presenter for Ashland Presbyterian Church, Ashland, VA

2006-2007 Seminary Intern for Adult Education at Nassau Presbyterian Church, Princeton, NJ

1998-2002 Director of Christian Nurture at United Presbyterian Church in Jamestown, NJ

1998-1999 Designated Supply Pastor for United Methodist Church, Cleveland, ND

1998-2005 Pulpit Supply Preacher

1997-1998 Interim Chaplain at Jamestown College

Other Services to the Denomination:

Caritas (Congregations Around Richmond Involved to Assure Shelter) Volunteer

Mission Trip to New York City after Hurricane Sandy

Prison Ministry Bible Study

Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teacher

Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

One night a few years ago I volunteered to wash dirty laundry when our church hosted a local homeless ministry. One bag contained only a very small pair of underwear, a set of mismatched socks, a small fleece throw, and an almost new pair of bib overalls, several sizes larger than the underwear.

Furthermore, these overalls had a small hole that did not allow a pretty patch. Ethically I did not have permission to fix it, but I also knew doing nothing was not appropriate. So I patched it and bought appropriated sized underwear and several pairs of socks, along with a Valentine’s Day card. In the card I wrote a message sharing God’s love, as well as an apology for the ugly patch and a promise to pray for him for the rest of my life.

Then I realized other men’s clothing might require mending. That night, when I returned with my sewing matching, is one of my favorite moments of ministerial life. I met Daniel, the very young owner of the torn overalls, and when I asked if he found my note of apology, he smiled and patted his chest pocket, thanking me and saying he was keeping that note right there by his heart. I did not ask Daniel his

1 story and he did not share it, but many men requiring mending did share their stories as they sat next to
2 me, visiting and watching me sew.

3
4 I finished just before midnight that night, and I was so moved by the men I met that the sewing ministry
5 during Caritas Week continues yet today, with others having joined me. And I continue to pray for
6 Daniel...

7
8 **Describe the ministry setting to which you believe God is calling you.**

9 Of all the elements of our Christian faith that an individual church will develop and express, I am most
10 drawn to one that cherishes tradition, community, and education.

11
12 Tradition is unfortunately characterized as defending the status quo, but Christianity has been expressed
13 through new cultures and new contexts since the resurrection. I seek a church where we can take the
14 skeleton of the Christian faith handed down through its heritage and gather together our unique talents
15 and treasures to animate that skeleton into a body of Christ relevant to its current community and
16 neighborhood.

17
18 For me, that community is small enough to know each other's names and journeys and is invested in
19 building relationships that model the love of Christ for each other and those who observe our fellowship.
20 Therefore, I see myself most comfortable as a solo pastor in a small town or rural congregation, called to
21 guide the mission of a church and challenge and nurture its educational charge.

22
23 Education informs and empowers a community, and I believe that Christianity is only translated into
24 today's context when people understand a teaching itself, not the rote repetition of the expression
25 through which it is practiced. I seek a congregation eager to discover scripture, theology, and history
26 through sermons, sacraments, classes, fellowship, and mission projects, and then make each discovery
27 part of its identity and its legacy.

28
29 **What areas of growth have you identified in yourself?**

30 Although I do not currently conduct services regularly, I have identified growth in pastoral formation.
31 Through pulpit supply, I am streamlining my sermon-writing process to allow time and energy for
32 pastoral care and visitation in a called position. My confidence within the pulpit and comfort conducting
33 services also continues to grow.

34
35 Furthermore, I also am choosing to experience the retirement of my congregation's pastor and the
36 current interim's process as an opportunity for growth. I observe his methods and messages as a pastor
37 rather than a layperson, knowing that any church that calls me will have just recently gone through the
38 same process we are now. I want to be familiar with the interim process and experience to develop
39 sensitivity to a new congregation. But I also want to learn insights and methods for congregational
40 growth and renewal that will be helpful during any period of congregational change.

41
42 And finally, I have discovered the *Rule of St. Benedict*, which I consult during my dissertation research,
43 offers wisdom on shepherding a flock that translates well from abbess and nuns and to pastor and
44 congregation. I ponder how my thoughts, words, and actions can be inspired by this ancient wisdom, and
45 two ideas I find appropriately formational are: "*The function of authority is not to control the other; it is*
46 *to guide and to challenge and to enable the other.*" And *the body of Christ is not a hierarchy of people,*
47 *but rather a "kind of natural hierarchy of gifts."*

1 **Describe a time when you have led change.**

2 Years ago the minister invited me as Director of Christian Nurture to assist at confirmation. I was
3 shocked that it only lasted 8 weeks, with the first being games and the last being a pizza party. When
4 offered the program the next year I accepted on the condition that it be expanded to one year. I proposed
5 adding a freshman year to the Logos program, and since most families were already involved in Logos,
6 parents welcomed the change.

7
8 I defended my program to the education committee, pointing out that Sunday school attendance was not
9 as regular, or lessons as ingrained, as many assumed. Then I taught a basic outline of scripture, popular
10 Bible stories, a basic history of Christianity, details and meanings of sacraments, and application of
11 Christian teachings to personal relationships. We visited other churches to better understand
12 Reformation history and denominational differences, and they were required to critique sermons, create
13 service and mission projects, write a personal statement of faith, and memorize the books of the Bible
14 and common scripture passages and creeds.

15
16 When they appeared before the session, they also recited memory work and their favorite passage,
17 explaining why it was their favorite, and answered a mystery question from me regarding something that
18 they learned that year. After the first year, the session allowed me to continue the program. Although I
19 initiated and executed this change, I was blessed with a church willing to explore an unorthodox option.

20
21 **Statement of Faith:**

22 I believe in One God, the Triune God, One Substance in Three Persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit, who
23 claimed me before I was born, and through whom all creation in heaven and on earth came into being,
24 and that creation was good. I believe that God is spirit, eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient,
25 good and holy, perfect and just.

26
27 I believe in Jesus Christ the Only Begotten Son, True God and True Man, Divine and Human, Unified
28 and Distinct. I believe the Son was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of his virgin
29 mother, Mary, with a body of true flesh and bone which suffered crucifixion and death for the purpose
30 of rendering all humanity justified before God by reconciling humanity with God. God forgives sinful
31 humanity because of God's great love for humanity. I believe on the third day Jesus was raised by God,
32 and after appearing to his followers he ascended into heaven, where though he is seated at the right hand
33 of his Father and will someday return to judge all humanity, he is with us always.

34
35 I believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son to work faith in believers. I
36 believe the Holy Spirit invites us into community with God, sealing us through the Sacrament of
37 Baptism; and lifts us up to God, that we may grow in grace and spiritual nourishment through the
38 Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In Baptism we receive forgiveness of sins, new life in Christ, and
39 admission into the Christian community; through the Lord's Supper Christ is present to us by faith
40 through the power of the Holy Spirit.

41
42 I believe that Holy Scripture is the faithful witness to and record of God's special revelation in Jesus the
43 Incarnate Son, written and canonized by persons inspired, guided and aided by the Holy Spirit as a
44 source of authority for proclamation by the Church to God's people. I believe Holy Scripture is not
45 salvific in and of itself, but rather it bears unique and authoritative witness to the Savior, Jesus Christ.

46

1 I believe that the Church is a community of forgiven believers who are created in God's image to glorify
2 God and love God forever. The Church is called to glorify and love God particularly through praise in
3 corporate worship, through education in the proclamation of the Word and right administration of the
4 Sacraments, and through preparing believers to discern their individual calls in response to the Great
5 Commission.

6
7 I believe all Christians are called as servants of Jesus Christ to fulfill the Church's mission, which is a
8 continuation of Jesus' own mission in this world. We are to proclaim forgiveness and reconciliation in
9 the name of Christ, to use our individual gifts to serve God and build up the Christian community, to
10 make disciples for Christ, and to advocate for our fellow human beings with compassion, justice, and
11 peace, all through the power of the Holy Spirit.

12
13 I believe that Evil is a real power which interacted with creation, resulting in both the Fall, when
14 humanity, male and female, disobeyed the command of God; and Original Sin, which renders all
15 humanity totally depraved and separated from God. I believe that being convicted of our sin through the
16 Law, we realize our need of Jesus' loving act of reconciliation, resulting in our adoption as Children of
17 God; and as a loving response instituted and enacted by the power of the Holy Spirit, we progress in
18 sanctification, dying unto sin and living unto righteousness, trusting in the Son for our forgiveness and
19 following his example for living.

20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

1 **Alexander Fischer**

2

3 **Ecclesiastical Status:** PC(USA) Teaching Elder (Minister of Word and Sacrament)

4 **Membership Presbytery:** Coastal Carolina

5 **Actively Seeking:** Open to receiving a call and moving within 9 months

6 **Formal Education:**

7 M.Div. Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2018

8 B.S. Music Industry Studies (Marketing and Management), Appalachian State University, 2015

9 **Position Types and Experience level:**

10 Associate, First Ordained Call

11 **Leadership Competencies:**

12 Preaching and Worship Leadership, Spiritual Maturity, Communicator, Technologically Savvy,

13 Task Manager, Collaboration, Interpersonal Engagement, Bridge Builder, Flexibility, Self-

14 Differentiation

15 **Work Experience:**

16 2017-Present Intern, Three Chopt Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA

17 2015-Present Music Leader, Three Chopt Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA

18 2016-Present Co-Chapel Coordinator, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA

19 2017 Chaplain Intern, Hunter Holmes McGuire, VA Medical Center

20 **Other Services to the Denomination:**

21 Young Adult Advisory Delegate, 222nd General Assembly, Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

22 Intern, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville, NC

23 Coastal Carolina Presbyterian Youth Council

24

25 **Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.**

26 Not long ago, I preached at my internship site for the second time. I was excited to preach the passage
27 assigned because 1) it was a passage from my favorite gospel John and 2) I was utilizing a Tom Petty
28 song and a portion of a Martin Luther King Jr. speech as part of my message. I also intentionally
29 focused on making the message “practical” and hands-on, being careful not to spend too much time
30 discussing the theoretical or exegetical sermon preparation. Unfortunately, I came down with a severe
31 cold and sore throat a couple of days before I was to preach this sermon (at *two* services, nonetheless). I
32 thought to myself, “Well, I’ve been called to preach, and this is the message I’ve been called to give,
33 whether I lose my voice or not.” Perhaps this was not the best self-care move, but I did what I could to
34 ease my discomfort that Sunday morning with hot tea and medicine. Not only was I able to preach at
35 both services, but my illustrations of Tom Petty and Dr. King were well received. The members of the
36 congregation where I serve felt the message was very relevant for the season the church was currently in
37 and they felt it was very hands-on and practical for their ministry. That Sunday morning was extremely
38 affirming for me and fostered a huge sense of ministry accomplishment.

39

40 **Describe the ministry setting to which you believe God is calling you.**

41 For my first ordained call, I believe God is calling me to serve as an Associate Pastor for a medium-to-
42 large size church. I have grown up and worshipped in mostly small-to-medium size congregations with
43 only one teaching elder on staff. I have found during my time in seminary and working at a medium
44 sized church that I work best when part of a team. I am energized by the passion and ideas of the people
45 I work with, and I feel that we sharpen each other’s ideas and contributions, like “iron sharpening iron.”
46 Collaboration in ministry often makes accomplishing specific goals and objectives easier and more
47 effective. Being at a medium-to-large sized church would also give me experience in a setting that is

1 relatively new to me, pushing me into new ways of perceiving and experiencing ministry on a larger
2 scale. Being at a congregation with more resources available would provide a wide-breadth of ministry
3 experience, ideally in regard to missions and pastoral care. Also, I would appreciate having specific
4 tasks to orient my pastoral ministry around instead of having a generalist position. I can be more
5 effective as a pastor by focusing on certain aspects of the church’s ministry, while collaborating and
6 leading others in carrying out other forms of ministry outside of my specific focus.

7
8 **What areas of growth have you identified in yourself?**

9 Over the past three years or so of seminary, I have felt my sense of pastoral authority grow
10 tremendously. Shortly after starting seminary, I felt like a small fish in a big pond. The world of pastoral
11 ministry seemed slightly overwhelming and part of this struggle was oriented around the fact that I was
12 one of the youngest students on campus. I thought that my lack of “real world” work experience would
13 be a detriment to my future pastoral ministry and it would take me a long time to own my “authority” as
14 a pastor. Fortunately, my call from God has been affirmed again and again by my friends, family,
15 colleagues, professors, and mentors. They have all helped me to own and grow in my sense of call and
16 believe in myself as one who is called by God to proclaim to the Good News, no matter what my age is
17 relative to everyone else. Clinical Pastoral Education was also a huge source of growth in wrestling with
18 this issue. Being a chaplain for veterans with many, many diverse life experiences changed my
19 perception of myself as a future minister of Word and Sacraments. The experience taught me how to
20 have a healthy awareness of my own anxieties, insecurities, and doubts, while still being able to minister
21 and serve others effectively and faithfully.

22
23 **Describe a time when you have led change.**

24 During my time of chapel coordinating for Union’s campus, I have wrestled with discerning the
25 “worshipping identity” of the campus. While we are a Presbyterian institution, we have many students
26 of other denominations who worship in different ways than Presbyterians, as well as a wide breath of
27 worship experiences within the PCUSA denomination. When I first came to Union, I was exposed to a
28 much more formal way of worship than I had previously experienced. I grew up in settings that were by
29 all means still traditional, but much less formal, with my experience in campus ministry in college
30 definitely having a contemporary flavor. I have learned a lot by working with our worship planning team
31 on campus about different models of worship. But I have also helped the team reconsider and rethink
32 the diversity of traditions we have on campus represented in our student body. Being a member of the
33 worship planning team as a chapel coordinator and having a background in less formal worship settings,
34 I have contributed to considering alternative ways we are able to worship as a community, which has
35 included worshipping around meals and utilizing various types of music, both secular and sacred. My
36 experience with chapel coordinating has certainly been one of “iron sharpening iron,” but I truly feel
37 that my contribution to the team has been one of both challenge and camaraderie.

38
39 **Statement of Faith:**

40 I believe in the triune God, expressed traditionally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the beginning, God
41 created all things seen and unseen and shaped the universe as we know it. Therefore, all things belong to
42 God. God rules over and sustains all things, including humanity. Scripture attests that God created
43 humanity in God’s image and tasked us as stewards of the created realm. All of humanity possesses the
44 image of God within them and are thus considered children of God.

1 Unfortunately, humanity is radically enveloped in the reality of sin. We are all in a broken state of being
2 and in an estranged relationship with God. Instead of seeking God’s will for our lives and for the world,
3 we would rather seek our own will and do what we think is best for our own well-being. The only way
4 we can escape this is something completely outside of ourselves turning our hearts away from ourselves
5 and back towards God and others.

6
7 This is where the work of God in Jesus Christ, the Son, comes in. Jesus of Nazareth was God made
8 flesh, fully present with humanity in its sinful reality. Jesus proclaimed the will of God for humanity and
9 the world. This was expressed often as the coming of the God’s kingdom. Because of Jesus’ persistence
10 in following the will of God, Jesus was ultimately led to death on a cross by the Roman government.
11 However, this was also a demonstration of God’s grace and all-encompassing love for humanity. Jesus’
12 death on the cross demonstrated a new way of looking at humanity’s relationship with God. We are
13 cleansed of our sin through God’s grace, so that we can be in closer relationship with God and be free to
14 follow in the way of Jesus in our daily living. God resurrecting Jesus three days after his crucifixion
15 demonstrated Jesus’ Lordship and authority over the lives of believers. Because of the resurrection, we
16 know that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

17
18 The Holy Spirit empowers, guides, and sustains the church and its mission in the world. The church
19 testifies to the reality of the resurrected Lord and how God’s spirit is working in their lives to be agents
20 of God’s justice and peace in the world, participating in God’s kingdom work. We know of this call
21 because of the witness of scripture, the Word of God given to the church. While human hands in a
22 specific cultural context wrote scripture, scripture is inspired by the Spirit and witnesses to the work of
23 God, becoming a Living Word to us today through the Holy Spirit, enabling us to hear God’s word anew
24 and know our calling as the people of God.

25 Through the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, we commune together as a body of faith,
26 united in trust and reliance on God. Baptism symbolizes God’s claim over our lives and marks the
27 beginning of our journey of faith. The Lord’s Supper represents our communing with the Lord and with
28 each other, as we invite others to join in community and journey alongside us in faith. As people of
29 faith, we retain hope and assurance that one day, God will set everything right and create a new heaven
30 and new earth, where God and all of creation will dwell together for all eternity.

1 **Lauren Elise Voyles**

2
3 **Ecclesiastical Status:** PC(USA) Candidate

4 **Membership Presbytery:** East Tennessee Presbytery

5 **Actively Seeking:** Open to receiving a call and moving within 9 months

6 **Formal Education:**

7 M.Div. Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2017

8 B.A. in Religion, Maryville College, 2013

9 **Continuing Education:**

10 2017-2018 Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA, CPE Resident

11 **Position Types and Experience level:**

12 Pastor, 11 months

13 Chaplain, 1 year

14 **Leadership Competencies:**

15 Compassionate, Preaching and Worship Leadership, Spiritual Maturity, Communicator, Public

16 Communicator, Bilingual, Advisor, Willingness to Engage Conflict, Motivator, Personal

17 Resilience, Self-Differentiation

18 **Work Experience:**

19 2017-2018 CPE Resident, Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA

20 2017 Pulpit Supply Pastor, Bott Memorial Presbyterian Church, DeWitt, VA

21 2015-2016 Seminary Intern Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA

22 2013-2014 Young Adult Volunteer, Grassroots Leadership, Austin, TX

23
24 **Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.**

25 I had a jarring encounter with a patient in the neuroscience unit of the hospital where I work. The patient
26 was scaring the staff with his sexual comments and inappropriate requests. I entered the room and
27 checked in with the sitter who had been assigned to him, and she exited upon my entry. After an initial
28 inappropriate request from C and me introducing myself, C began to tell me about the horrifying abuse
29 he suffered as a child and everything he had endured. He was not interested in talking about religion and
30 made disparaging comments about God, but I listened anyway. I told him how sorry I was for his
31 suffering and all the things to which he had been subjected. I emphasized his worth as a person, and that
32 he did not deserve the treatment that he received. The most profound moment, however, was his request
33 that I help him pour and mix the coffee that a nurse had brought him. For some strange reason, he
34 wanted the coffee divided between two cups before he would drink it. I did as he asked, cream and sugar
35 included, all the while staving off inquiries from hospital security. While alarming, C's comments
36 showed me that he was deeply hurt and would have great difficulty understanding intimacy and love.
37 While reflecting on the coffee gesture, I couldn't help but be reminded of the table to which Christ calls
38 us all, and at which we are enjoined to pull up a chair for others, too. I am blessed that God used me in
39 this sacramental, if not also awkward and disconcerting, moment.

40
41 **Describe the ministry setting to which you believe God is calling you.**

42 I believe that God is calling me to hospital chaplaincy. I feel energized by the hospital setting, and I am
43 able to witness to God's unfailing love in a place that can feel lonely and disorienting: the hospital. I
44 provide a ministry of presence to people and families who find themselves in a variety of circumstances,
45 some routine and some profoundly serious. My hospital ministry is meaningful to me and, I believe to
46 others, because what patients and their families experience is where our theological "rubber" meets the
47 practical, harsh "road," so to speak. In addition, hospital staff members need to be reminded of God's

1 presence just as much as patients do. I have cultivated deep relationships with nurses, doctors, and
2 others who appreciate the chaplains' presence. I feel called to provide Good News and a reminder of
3 God's presence in a place where uncertainty and "bad news" can be overwhelming. Chaplaincy in the
4 healthcare setting can take a variety of shapes, and I would be happy serving in capacities where I
5 develop long-term relationships (such as palliative care) or acute care. However, I also enjoy preaching
6 and exegesis, so I can see myself serving as a parish associate in a congregation, or in a pulpit supply
7 capacity while simultaneously serving as a chaplain.

8
9 **What areas of growth have you identified in yourself?**

10 CPE has been instrumental in allowing me to grow regarding my engagement in group dynamics and
11 confrontation. During my second residency unit, a colleague said some things that hurt me deeply. I took
12 time with my supervisor to explore my feelings, and I carefully wrote a pointed, yet compassionate
13 response to my colleague. I raised the hurt I felt and why it hurt so much, yet I emphasized my
14 commitment to her and to the CPE process. Because I took initiative and did not hide my feelings, she
15 and I were able to move forward as colleagues and friends. This experience has confirmed a tendency
16 that I already had as a young child, teenager, and young adult: that compassionately confronting an issue
17 with respect, mutual dialogue, and love is the best starting place to resolving conflict.

18 In addition, I have become much more comfortable with anger, both mine and other people's. My
19 exposure to angry and grieving people in the hospital has allowed me to understand the sources and
20 validity of anger. This exposure has helped me to voice my discomfort with anger that I think is
21 misplaced or inappropriate, while maintaining a sense of understanding and compassion for the one
22 expressing the anger. Most importantly, I am able to express my own anger appropriately and without
23 guilt, and I can use that anger for positive change within group dynamics. Carol Saussy's *The Gift of*
24 *Anger*, which my CPE supervisor recommended, has been invaluable in my learning.

25
26 **Describe a time when you have led change.**

27 Recently, my CPE peers and I realized that we were not filling out Advance Medical Directives
28 correctly. We also noticed that we were not following the correct procedure for documenting these
29 documents' existence within the hospital's charting system, meaning that the AMD would not be seen as
30 "on file" in the system. This is detrimental because, if there were an emergency medical providers would
31 not be able to see that the patient had an AMD. So, with the help of my three colleagues, I created a
32 checklist of items that we were not taught during our orientation, and insisted that a staff chaplain set
33 aside time to teach us how to fill out, copy, and chart the documents correctly. We gained clarity about
34 what to do and how to ensure that a patient's information is available to all who need it. Such
35 clarification is crucial for multiple parties within the hospital: for medical providers, so that they can
36 abide by a patient's wishes; for the hospital itself, to avoid liability; for chaplains, both to avoid liability
37 and to effectively minister to patients who are thinking about end of life issues; and patients and family
38 members, who need to know that we know what we are doing. My dedication to my colleagues, our
39 department, and our patients is presently causing a change within our department regarding how
40 orientation is conducted, the production of manuals and checklists for tasks, and clear instructions for
41 each part of our hospital ministry.

1 **Statement of Faith:**

2 God is my Creator, my Savior and my Comforter. Everything came into being through the Word, which
3 was in the beginning with God. God sent Jesus to show us a new way to live, and God consequently
4 sent the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide the church. I am created by God the Creator, saved by God the
5 Savior and comforted by the Holy Spirit, who moves and lives among us. That also means I must be
6 humble, because the whole of creation, of which I am but a small part, relates to God in the same
7 fashion.

8
9 As a Presbyterian, I am part of the Reformed tradition. That means that I am part of a body of people
10 who are “reformed and always being reformed.” Consequently, I am called to constantly discern what I
11 believe, what I practice, what I claim, and how I serve. That entails asking questions, engaging in
12 conversation, and listening, especially to those whose beliefs are different from my own. We are a
13 denomination that is constantly examining how God calls us to act in an ever-changing world. The
14 church is both transcendent and worldly: it expresses God’s presence with us now as we worship and
15 work for justice now, and is a gathering of Christians in every time and place.

16
17 Scripture is the ground on which the church’s action is built. God’s Spirit moved in people who
18 transmitted and wrote God’s Word and shared it throughout the ages. Scripture follows God’s
19 forgiveness of wayward people and details God’s commandments for how we live with one another. The
20 Gospel is God’s upheaval of systems of power and empire in our world. Jesus’ radical inclusivity is an
21 example for church in every time and place: stand with the marginalized, feed the hungry, welcome the
22 immigrant, visit and comfort the sick, humanize the prisoner. Being the church actively entails resisting
23 oppression and dehumanization. Likewise, we are called to embrace those who society has deemed
24 unworthy and invisible by embodying God’s love and grace. God’s means of grace--the sacraments--are
25 embodied in this calling. I am a part of the body of Christ through my baptism, and I live it out through
26 service. Additionally, I give voice to the presence of Christ at the Table when I seek to include those
27 who often do not have a seat at our earthly tables.

28
29 I affirm the sovereignty of God and God’s grace found in Scripture. Salvation is not the doing of human
30 beings, and is God’s work alone. Therefore, I am free to focus on how the Gospel is employed in the
31 world through service, love and compassion.

32
33 God sent Christ into the world to be a beacon of light in the darkness that we create for ourselves:
34 poverty, estrangement, lack of community, and our condemnation of ourselves and others. Christ’s
35 incarnational love for us proclaims that God’s grace and mercy are bigger than our sin could ever be.
36 Christ’s presence with us is God’s proclamation of redemption and love despite our waywardness, our
37 resistance, and our self-centeredness. Christ’s life, death, and resurrection open our eyes to our own
38 created-ness in God’s image, and a better way to live with one another. We no longer have to be bound
39 up in what the world thinks about our value. Rather, through Christ’s teachings, we learn that our sin,
40 and death, never have the last word. Through Christ, we are saved from feeling worthless and alone, and
41 we are free to embrace one another as God’s children. This means that we remain in solidarity with one
42 another not only in worship and praise of God, but in our societal struggles against racism, classism,
43 sexism, discrimination, poverty, and anything that reduces our fellow humans to anything less than the
44 Divine that lives within them. The Good News is a call to justice, to service, and to solidarity with those
45 whom the world has rejected. Christ calls us to a new way of being with each other on earth, and gives
46 us the good news of eternal life where we will praise God for ages to come.

47