

COMMITTEE ON LAY PREACHING (CoLP)
Report to Presbytery Assembly -- September 21, 2013

ALP = Authorized Lay Preacher
CoLP = Committee on Lay Preaching
COM = Committee on Ministry

PSV = Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley
RE = Ruling Elder
TE = Teaching Elder

PART ONE

Authorized Lay Preachers prepared to be Commissioned

Ruling Elders Michele Brackin, Fred Downs, Marsha Muller, and Lynn Reeves are candidates to be commissioned as Authorized Lay Preachers by the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

Their completed preparation and submitted materials include:

Core Courses:

Old Testament Introduction and Exegesis taught by John Gay
New Testament Introduction and Exegesis taught by Brian Babcock
Liturgy taught by Doug Hatch, Pat Raube, and Cynthia Walton-Leavitt
Preaching taught by Bob Heinle

Class:

Presbyterian Polity taught by Jim Martin and Cynthia Walton-Leavitt

CoLP Retreats (at least one):

January 2012 at Sky Lake
July 2013 at Christ the King
January 2013 at Stella Maris

"Neutral Pulpits" - leading worship for a congregation other than their own

Three evaluations were received from worshippers and given to the candidates

Materials submitted:

Statement of Faith
"Concept of Call" essay
Endorsement by their Session and/or Pastor

Interview with CoLP Team:

All the items above were reviewed and discussed with each candidate as was a draft of the ALP Guidelines (*see part 2 of this report*).

ALP Candidates

Elder Michele Brackin, a member of First PC, Dryden, is part of a team that has been leading a 10-15 minute contemporary worship time for the past seven years. Her pastor David Robinson encouraged her to begin taking the CoLP courses and since completing them Michele is more passionate about sharing the good news from a pulpit. In her essay about why she wants to be a lay preacher she says, "The biblical exegesis has revealed so much more than I truly understood before. It also has given me the tools to explore the bible more and the pieces of the puzzle fit together revealing more of God's ultimate plan. The insights that I uncover for myself, gives me enthusiasm to share them with others."

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Elder Fred Downs, a member of United PC, Cincinnatus, has been a commissioned lay preacher since June 15, 1993. He has led worship for many of our congregations and has a gift for leading witnesses to the resurrection in his community for those “un-churched” or with pastors for those who have a church home. In his Statement of Faith Fred says, “When I have decisions to make, important or otherwise, I try to involve God, through prayer and observance of nature and study of Holy Scripture, in making those decisions. This practice was encouraged by my grandfather, Rev. Fred M. Sawyer (my namesake), a Methodist pastor. Experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of this discipline.”

Elder Marsha Muller is a member of Hamden PC (part of Central Delaware Trinity Covenant). In her “Concept of Call” essay Marsha says that she has felt God’s call to become a lay preacher ever since her pastor left. She also feels there is great need for lay preachers, especially in rural Delaware County. Her current pastor Marena Vittorio says, “I have witnessed Marsha’s great love and passion for God and the church. She leads worship with dedication and thoughtfulness; she serves homebound communion with humility and gentleness; and she teaches Bible study guided by God’s wisdom, doing her best to make everyone feel comfortable and valued in studying the scriptures.”

Elder Lynn Reeves, a member of Afton PC, has been a commissioned lay preacher since 1998. In her Statement of Faith Lynn says, “The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week in which we worship God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit both by ourselves and in a formal church setting. Jesus told us that wherever two or more are gathered in his name he is with us, therefore, gathering as a congregation we are in his presence and joining in praise and thanksgiving.” Lynn’s “Sense of Call” essay tells about God healing her vocal cords after losing her voice. And, although in pain much of the time, when she is in the pulpit she has no pain which helps her feel that she is doing God’s work.

Renewal of each commission will be done by the Committee on Lay Preaching and reported to Presbytery on an annual basis. The core courses outlined above will not be required to be taken again. The criterion for annual renewal includes leading worship a minimum of three times per year and 12 hours of continuing education provided by or approved by CoLP.

<u>ACTION:</u>

The Committee on Lay Preaching recommends that Ruling Elders Michele Brackin (First PC, Dryden), Fred Downs (United PC, Cincinnatus), Marsha Muller (Hamden PC), and Lynn Reeves (Afton PC) be commissioned as Authorized Lay Preachers in the Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley.

If the way be clear, commissioning gifts to be presented will include a PC(USA) logo pendant for Michele, Marsha, and Lynn -- and an Amazon gift certificate for Fred.

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PART TWO

ACTION: Authorized Lay Preacher (ALP) Guidelines *(See separate sheet)*
CoLP recommends the adoption of the paper "Authorized Lay Preacher Guidelines."

REPORTS:

1) Preaching Report for Commissioned Lay Pastors and commissioned lay preachers for January through June 2013. *(See separate sheet)*

2) Polity Class: Saturday, July 20th in Bainbridge
The Rev. Drs. Jim Martin (Stated Clerk) and Cynthia Walton-Leavitt taught a polity class on July 20th at FPC, Bainbridge. Those in attendance included ALP candidates, COM members and those interested in the CoLP programs for CLPs and ALPs.

3) Continuing Education & Christian Enrichment Opportunities
The CoLP Chair maintains an email list of people interested in CoLP courses and classes. Information about programs offered by other presbyteries, denominations, or groups are also sent out. To be added to this e-mail group, send an email to cynuff@aya.yale.edu

4) Old Testament Introduction & Exegesis Course with Christopher Hooker

This course will be a hybrid of "in-person" and "on-line" teaching and assignments designed to help develop biblical knowledge and exegesis skills.

"In-person" start date is Saturday, September 28th
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM -- at Nineveh Presbyterian Church
ALL CoLP courses are open to ALL members and friends!

Although the primary audience are those who may be asked to lead worship in their own church -- or those seeking to become lay preachers -- this course may also be of benefit to those teaching Church School, leading Bible study, or have a desire to increase their understanding of the Bible. Please invite individuals you know to join us.

Full syllabus is available at <http://www.susvalpresby.org/groups/committee-lay-preaching>

Cost: \$50 per person payable to "Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley" (OT on memo line). Churches are encouraged to pay for all or part of the registration fee for participants from scholarship or Christian Enrichment funds.

For more info. -- or to register for the OT course:

Contact Chris Hooker at (607) 746-3171 or christopher.hooker@gmail.com
Or, simply join us on Saturday, September 28th in Nineveh



Our CoLP program continues to evolve as we endeavor to serve the members and friends who worship with the congregations of our Presbytery. We welcome your participation in our courses and classes -- and your input to help improve our efforts.

Contact: CoLP Chair Cynthia Walton-Leavitt at (607) 267-4333 or cynuff@aya.yale.edu