

To: Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Member Churches of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, and Ruling Elder Members of Presbytery

From: Ruling Elder Alice McCollum, Moderator
Ruling Elder Larry Hollar, Stated Clerk

Date: October 14, 2020

**CALL OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY, AND SERVICE OF ORDINATION
FOR CANDIDATE SUSAN BRASIER**

**Tuesday, October 27, 2020
At 2:30 pm**

VIA ZOOM

In accordance with Section 4.02 of the Bylaws of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, a special meeting of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley and a service of worship for ordination has been called for the purposes listed in the docket that follows on page 2. Motions and appendices pertaining to those purposes are on subsequent pages.

The special meeting has been called at the request of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and with concurrence from the Committee on Ministry. The service of worship for ordination that follows adoption of the approval motion is called at the request of the Candidate Susan Brasier that she be ordained in this, her presbytery of care, and with the agreement of the Moderator of the presbytery and the Committee on Ministry. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has accepted this process as part of the Candidate's reception to that denomination and to serve a church in Canada.

All voting presbyters planning to join the October 27 meeting are encouraged to carefully read instructions for how to participate via Zoom provided in the transmittal email for the call of this meeting and in the invitation email to the meeting for those who register. All minister members of presbytery, ruling elder commissioners appointed by their church sessions, and ruling elder members of presbytery are entitled to speak and vote and should participate through Zoom. Others who wish to observe the meeting are welcome to watch on the livestream at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfjicUX_TTop6BbojbVZPug.

Note that voting presbyters and authorized visitors planning to participate in the Zoom part of the October 27 meeting must register in advance to receive an invitation to the meeting. Contact Larry Hollar by noon on Monday, October 26, to register (larry.hollar@miamipresbytery.org or 937-643-3168). Those watching by livestream do not need to register.

**DOCKET FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY AND
SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR THE ORDINATION OF CANDIDATE SUSAN BRASIER AS A
MINISTER OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT
Tuesday, October 27, 2020**

VIA ZOOM—ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

2:15 pm Registered members are welcome to enter the Zoom call at this time

2:30 pm CONVENING PRAYER – Ruling Elder Alice McCollum, Moderator

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS - Ruling Elder Larry Hollar, Stated Clerk

- o Statement of Quorum & Formation of the Roll
- o Attestation to call of the meeting
- o Clarification of process for special meeting of presbytery and explanation of using Zoom for recognition, debate, and voting
- o Motions to seat those granted voice at this meeting; granting excuses

ACTION FROM THE COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY—Minister of the Word and Sacrament Michael Isaacs, chair

- o **Motion 1:** That the presbytery examine Candidate Susan Brasier for ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pursuant to 2.07 of the Book of Order and of Section 1.02 of the CPM Policy and Practice (p. 3);
- o Following the close of the examination, **Motion 2:** That the presbytery approve the ordination of Candidate Susan Brasier as a minister of the Word and Sacrament under G-2.0502 and G-3.0301c (a majority vote of presbytery is required), and authorize her enrollment as a member of this presbytery (p. 3).

[If Motion 2 is approved:]

SERVICE OF WORSHIP TO ORDAIN CANDIDATE SUSAN BRASIER AS A MINISTER OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT – Moderator Alice McCollum

ADJOURNMENT WITH PRAYER

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Rationales and detailed motions to be offered at this meeting, as well as related Appendices, follow.

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**RATIONALES AND MOTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON
PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY AND COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Rationale of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry:

Susan Brasier enrolled with our Committee on the Preparation of Ministry in 2015. As a part of her preparation for ministry, she completed an M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary (compulsory coursework from the committee included Hebrew, Greek, Presbyterian polity, Presbyterian worship and sacraments, exegesis, reformed theology, as well as field education in a congregational setting), completed a Clinical Pastoral Education program in Canada, and successfully passed ordination examinations in polity, theology, exegesis and worship sacraments. At the end of the process she could clearly articulate to us her sense of call, a personal faith, an understanding of the church, a plan for on-going professional development, and a deepening sense of self-awareness.

Following the successful completion of the aforementioned process, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry prayerfully discerned in May 2020 that Susan Brasier was ready to receive a call as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. The Committee now requests that the presbytery examine and approve her for ordination.

Rationale of the Committee on Ministry:

In assessing Candidate Susan Brasier's readiness for examination and ordination, the Committee on Ministry has:

1. At the request of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, concurred in Candidate Susan Brasier being examined for ordination by the presbytery and, if approved, to be enrolled as a member of this presbytery; and

2. Found that the position of Stated Supply Ministry with the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for which the Candidate has been approved to serve by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, is a suitably ordainable position in a denomination in relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and that the salary and benefits terms are adequate. (September 29, 2020)

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Based on these findings of both committees, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry offers the following motions:

Motion 1: That the presbytery examine Candidate Susan Brasier for Ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament pursuant to G-2.07 of the Book of Order and of Section 1.02 of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Policy and Practice.

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(Following completion of the examination)

Motion 2: That the Presbytery of the Miami Valley:

- a) approve the ordination of Candidate Susan Brasier as a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) under G-2.0502 and G-3.0301c, and authorize the presbytery to organize and carry out a service of ordination under G-2.0703 and W-4.04.; and
- b) authorize the Stated Clerk to enter Rev. Susan Brasier’s name on the rolls of this presbytery as a minister of the Word and Sacrament upon completion of the service of ordination. (Motion 2 requires a majority vote of presbytery)

If Motion 2 is approved, at the request of the Candidate and with the concurrence of the presbytery Moderator, the presbytery without objection shall enter into a Service of Worship for the purpose of ordaining Candidate Susan Brasier as a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

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Three appendices related to the above motions follow:

Appendix A: Statement of Faith of Candidate Susan Brasier

Appendix B: Brief Summary of Call Experience of Candidate Susan Brasier

Appendix C: Biographical Background of Candidate Susan Brasier

An order of worship for the Service of Ordination may be distributed later by posting on the presbytery web site

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APPENDIX A
Statement of Faith
Candidate Susan Brasier

I believe in one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit/Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

I feel God’s gentle nurturing presence as certainly as I feel a soft breeze across my face on a spring day. I understand this presence as the omnipotent benevolent “he/she/it that is they.” What the ancients called YHWH and we now call God. The great “I AM” who spoke all good things into being.

God who sent planets spinning also created us to celebrate God and to enjoy and care for all of creation – for the planet, the animals, the plants, and for each other. But we failed to trust God. We became afraid. This fear is evidence of our brokenness and our sin. There is a reason that throughout Scripture – from Genesis to Revelation -- humans are told not to be afraid. God seeks to be reconciled with us, comfort us, and reassure us that we are beloved children of the Kingdom of God.

God accomplished this reconciliation by taking on flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. The incarnation of God in the person of Jesus broke the boundaries in which humanity had ensnared itself. Jesus extended grace and called us once again to live in community with God. Jesus demonstrated how fiercely God identifies with the victims of injustice by becoming one of them – and one of us. On the cross, Jesus suffered as a condemned outcast so that humanity could understand what he meant when he said, “what you do to the least of these, that you do to me.” He suffers along with the marginalized, showing solidarity with their plight and calling us to be his hands, voice, and feet to ease their pain and pursue peace.

Jesus taught a message of radical courage and hospitality. Jesus cooked for his friends and broke bread with his companions before sending them out into the world to be the Church. I believe in the breaking of bread and the building of community. In the Lord’s Supper we are invited to the table to be united with God and each other, to enjoy a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, and to focus our attention on broken bodies and spilt blood of the marginalized. At the table we are nourished for the journey of life and strengthened to be about God’s work here and now. I believe in baptism God pours out the Holy Spirit designating us as children of the kingdom. I accept that we will never understand the mystery of the Almighty. This is what it means to be a people of faith.

I believe that after Jesus’ crucifixion, God did something new. Something that amazed and emboldened his disciples. Something that gave his small group of followers the courage to venture to the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire spreading the good news God has come to be reconciled with all of humanity. Something that gave them peace that surpassed all understanding. I believe that startling, motivating, empowering “something” was the disciples’ encounter with the Emmaus-walking, Thomas-comforting, living breathing Jesus who after climbing out of the tomb barbequed fish on the beach for his friends. I believe that that something delivers us from death to eternal life.

I believe the Holy Spirit inspired humans to record the words and ideas contained in scripture. Through scripture, we experience, interpret, and come to understand God. Scripture contains truths that spoke words of comfort and inspiration to our ancestors and those words still speak to us today.

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(Appendix B follows)

APPENDIX B

Brief Summary of Call Experience Candidate Susan Brasier

By the time I was a young teenager I had a sense that God was calling me to ministry of the word and sacrament. I loved not only the fellowship of being in a community of faith but I was thrilled to see the Holy Spirit in action as a congregation came together to undertake a mission project. Where once there was nothing, a small group of people emboldened by the Almighty could create much goodness in a hurting world. I wanted to be part of that; to facilitate that; to encourage that. My pleasure in public speaking coupled with my passion for social justice issues suggested to my young adolescent mind that I might even be able to preach.

So I discussed my desire to pursue ministry with my pastor at that time. He advised against it. He told me I would never receive a call because of my gender and that the three years I would spend in seminary would be wasted. So if I could not study God's laws, I chose to study humanity's laws and became an attorney. I thought serving as a lawyer, helping those who are disadvantaged, would offer opportunities to satisfy my need to be responsive to God's presence in my life

I did an enormous amount of pro bono work. I often worked on behalf of victims of domestic violence. These are ugly difficult cases. Most attorneys don't want to handle such cases because victims frequently recant and blame the officers or the system. And then there were the 6:00 a.m. phone calls from the detectives informing me of brutal homicides. I have seen evil and I know what it means to walk with people through hell. I come out of this cauldron emotionally resilient and still passionate to be the hands and feet of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring peace – because, more than most people, I understand its life-sustaining value.

During my thirties, I served six years on our Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The work on this committee was such a contrast to my work as a lawyer. I am much happier when labors are framed with prayer and filled with delicious stories of God's efforts to recruit and prepare disciples to carry forth the message of love to a wounded world. Listening to the inquirers and candidates grapple with scripture and ponder the mysteries presented only served to further my desire to join in this holy work. In each conversation, I could feel God nudging me. Often I would cry as I drove home from the meetings because I felt such an ache to follow God's call.

It was not until the late summer of 2015 that someone affirmed what my heart had longed for. Rev. Brian Maguire presented to me the idea of leaving my life in Dayton, my work, my family, my house to pursue a theological education. Many people thought I had lost my mind, but I felt that I was finally finding my way. Despite having two kid in college and a thriving legal practice, I walked away to the strange and exotic land of New Jersey to take my place alongside classmates – some of whom were younger than my offspring. Often I would walk across the Princeton campus absolutely gob-smacked that I was there. I enjoyed in every minute of it.

When I left Dayton four years ago, I was fearful that no church would want me as their minister. The words of my pastor all those decades ago lingered with me. But my experience over the past several months meeting with so many wonderful people serving

faithfully on so many PNCs has completely shattered any sense of self-doubt. Every PNC -- prickly ones struggling to find an interim to gracious ones looking for a solo pastor -- ended up welcoming me warmly. I had an abundance of opportunities and felt so incredibly affirmed by this final step in the process. I feel confident that the call to Saint Andrews in Fredericton, New Brunswick is exactly where God needs me to be.

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APPENDIX C

Biographical Background Provided By Candidate Susan Brasier



Much of what Susan Brasier is -- her values and her sense of purpose in life -- was infused in her by her upbringing in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Born in Dayton, Ohio, the daughter of a school teacher and a tool and die maker, Susan is a cradle Presbyterian. Susan was steeped in Reformed Theology that she experienced attending pre-school, Sunday School, VBS, Youth Fellowship, Adult Education, CPM, COM in the lifetime she has spent at Fairmont Presbyterian Church in Kettering, Ohio and the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. Values of social justice and the call to be God's hands and feet in a hurting world all developed through the fellowship of other believers in the church.

Discouraged from pursuing God's Call to ministry as a young woman, Susan became a trial lawyer working over three decades in courts in Montgomery County. She started practice for Pepper, Hamilton, LLC in the Detroit, Michigan office, and then worked for former Smith & Schnacke. When she started her family, Susan became an assistant Montgomery County prosecutor before accepting the position at the City Prosecutor for the Municipality of Riverside. She was also a partner at Falke & Dunphy, LLC. Her work on behalf of marginalized communities including victims of domestic violence earned her the Artemis Peacekeeper's Award as well as the Legal Aide Lloyd O'Hara "Access to Justice Award."

Susan earned her B.Phil. from Miami University, her law degree from the University of Dayton, and her M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. She spent the past year in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada (three hours east of Bangor, Maine) completing an extended unit of Clinical Spiritual Care with the Horizon Health Network. She is married to Dr. Tom Goud who is a Classicist with the University of New Brunswick. Tom's area of study is Early Christian History. He serves as the chair of the synoptic gospel section of the International Society of Biblical Literature. Susan loves to tag along to Tom's meetings. Susan describes herself as a cookie-baking, marathon-running mother

of three adult sons who has a passion for the visual arts, cooking, eating great food, reading, quilting, and enjoying wonderful conversations. Susan and Tom have an adorable, but rather poorly behaved, new kitten named ZoeRuth.

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