

I am motivated in my ministry by God's call. My ministry first and foremost starts with God. It is a journey that has a long way to go. In the summer of 2003, I heard God's call when all sense of direction in my life seemed lost. A nudging-look into lay preaching. After taking classes in Penn Yan, COM recommended that I take some online courses through Dubuque. I hesitated. This was going to cost more money. After contemplation and prayer, I took the recommended classes and more. I attained a CLP certificate. (Now CRE). I was unsettled. What to do now? I had been commissioned to preach as a lay preacher by presbytery. God brought a supportive husband into my life who was willing to watch my youngest autistic child. This made it possible for me to preach in area pulpits as called. Still, there continued to be a feeling in the pit of my stomach. This wasn't enough. I was supposed to do more, but what? I had already looked into the online MDiv degree from Dubuque. They required a two week residency during January J-term; this wasn't possible for a teacher. What to do? I started looking at area seminary's. I couldn't go too far from home. I applied to CRCDS in Rochester and was accepted. Simultaneously, I went to session to start the process to become an Inquirer. The feeling in the pit of my stomach went away.

I think I really wanted to become a pastor as a teenager, but couldn't reconcile this with Paul's view in the Bible. I settled for a degree in Christian Education from Houghton College. One day before starting, I was driving to Ovid and felt inspired to call Houghton and ask them to change my major to music education; I had been directing the choir at church and LOVED it. I had told my piano teacher I would NEVER go into music. It won't be the last time I eat my words. I went to Houghton as a Music Education major. God used this degree to mold me. I was shy; not used to getting up in front of people. Teaching changes you. I have been teaching since 1985 in various music positions. Each one has brought new challenges and provided new avenues for growth. I have experienced marriage, parenting, raising a special's need child and all the challenges that go along with this, have experienced divorce and the death of both my parents. At one time, I questioned how God could use me; I felt broken, especially after the divorce. Then, I realized that it was because I was "broken" that God could and would use me to help others.

It has been over a year since CPM recommended that I consider changing my status from Inquirer to Candidate. Originally, I was in no hurry. Now is the time. I plan on retiring from teaching in two years and going back full time to finish my MDiv degree. I have been taking one class a semester for the past three and a half years. By the time I retire, I should have eleven classes or thirty three credits. COM asked me to help out at Oaks Corners Presbyterian Church just over three years ago. I preach there two times a month. I have gained insight and hands-on experience working with the church congregation and session. The church has been wonderful about allowing me avenues to try different things. I have been asked by COM to moderate session meetings and congregational meetings when needed. I have had the privilege of doing pastoral visits, taking "prayer bears" (bears that have been prayed over) to those in need of God's hug, and did some prayer workshops a couple of years ago. This summer, I have had them contemplating the church's mission past, present, and future. Requesting to have my status changed from Inquirer to Candidate seems a natural step in faithfully moving forward and responding to God's call.