Form 1D

Session Evaluation and Recommendation Regarding Enrollment as an Inquirer

The session of Westminster Presbyterian Church (*name of church*) Bay City (*city*) MI (*state*)

met with Nikelle Johnson (*name of applicant*) on 04/20/2021 (*date*) and submits its report on the following pages.

The session endorses ☑ / does not endorse ☐ this applicant's request to be enrolled as an inquirer.

Liaison

The session has appointed the following ruling elder to act as a liaison with this individual and with the presbytery's committee, and to participate with the individual and the presbytery as they explore and evaluate his/her progress.

Name: (*title*) (*family*) Higgins (*first*) Brandi (*middle/natal*) M

Current address: 470 N Mackinaw Rd (*street*) Linwood (*city*) MI (*state*) 48634 (*zip*)

Main phone: (989) 397-6527 Mobile (*h/o/m*) Alt phone: Home (*h/o/m*)

Email: greggsgirl93@aol.com

This report was prepared for the session by:

Name: (*title*) Rev (*family*) Milton (*first*) Richard (*middle/natal*) J

Main phone: (989) 686-1360 Office (*h/o/m*) Alt phone: (336) 675-2306 Mobile (*h/o/m*)

Email: pastor@wpcbc.org

Report on Session's Consultation with Applicant

To assist the presbytery in reaching its decision regarding whether to enroll the applicant as an inquirer, please provide brief responses to the following issues for consideration when consulting with a prospective inquirer (see *Advisory Handbook,* pp. 68). Since this is the beginning of the process, primary attention should be given at this time to evaluating natural gifts, quality of commitment, strength of motivation, and potential for growth. Each of these issues should be pursued at greater depth during the period of inquiry.

1. What personal qualities are evidence of a healthy and vital faith in God through Jesus Christ?

Nikelle is a compassionate and caring individual, evident in her commitment to ministry here at Westminster, but also in her earlier work in Mississippi. Nikelle speaks of and acts with ease in her committment to social justice as an expression of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Being around Nikelle is a "peace-filled" experience; she is warm, cheerful, considerate, and well-like by her co-workers in minstry. Nikelle is a thoughtful person, willing to talk about and share her own faith journey on an appropriately personal level; she is thoughtful when she considers the needs of others when they speak of and live out their faith jouney.

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2. How is that faith currently being expressed through the individual's participation in the worship, life, and mission of this congregation?

Her faith and committment to our congregation is evident in 1) her committment to the children and families of our church with the goal in mind of enhancing their relationship with God through Jesus Christ [this year she planned and executed our first Easter Vigil which was so well received that we expect it will be an annual service] 2) her willingness to share her faith - beliefs and questions - in small groups with other folks in the congregation; 3) weekly involvement in worship including children's messages and music ministry; 4) using her technology skills to reach out to congregants through our website and Face Book; 5) using her creativity to enhance the worship experience in the sanctuary through the use of the visual arts; 5) developing relationships with members of the congregation to build a sense of teamwork as the body of Christ.

3. What motivations, whether positive or negative, impel the sense of call? Service to God and the world? Compassion for God's children? Guilt? A need for power and status?

Nikelle's sense of motivation in ministry now and in pursuing an expansion of that call into ordained pastoral ministry comes from a genuine sense of call…in one sense a natural extension of the ministry in which she has been engaged in for years. She has been actively involved as a Christian Educator, primarily with children for quite some time, but now senses a call to minister to the whole of a congregation. She comes from a family with at least two ordained pastors; this would seem to give her a good and broad understanding of pastoral ministry. There is no evidence of this call coming from a sense of guilt or a need for power or status or any other negative motivation. As she has explored her sense of call, she has blossomed even more in her sense of personal call to service and compassion.

4. What real and potential talents for ministry are evident in this individual (e.g., the ability to communicate, interpersonal skills, leadership or administrative abilities)?

Nikelle has many real skills and talents for congregational ministry that are already evident in her work as a CE Director - engaging others in specific ministries such as Sunday School, VBS, weekly Wednesday afternoon programs for kids, yearly Christmas programs (creatively changed up this year to manage COVID restrictions, expanded even to even include Easter program with kids & families); using Face Book as a means of enhancing connections and engagement; administratively providing technology support to staff; well organized when developing and executing new programs; well liked by staff. She has worked to recruit a cadre of volunteers for VBS and SS, providing the necessary training. She also serves as the staff liason with two church committees - Family and Fellowship and Spiritual Growth. Her "can do" attitude is appreciated.

5. What is the level and adequacy of the individual's academic interest, leadership skills, cross-cultural competencies, emotional intelligence, and motivations?

Nikelle already has successfully completed a Master of Religious Education (MRE) which I think speaks to her academic interests and capabilities. She has also pursued certification as a Christian Educator. Her work in Mississippi at Voice of Calvary Ministries and Habitat for Humanity speaks to her committment to cross-cultural awareness even within the United States as well as her committment to justice awareness and action. As noted above, her leadership skills are already evident in a variety of ministries in Westminster, including leading worship and preaching on occasion.

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6. What is the evidence of his or her physical health and stamina?

Nikelle has rarely missed any days at work because of illness. Her stamina is easily evident in her work with children and youth - taking the youth to Spring Hill Camps for winter weekend retreats, organizing children and family evidents that require physical stamina, and working with energy to complete all of work necessary leading up to VBS. Nikelle has a youthful energy necessary for congregational ministry.

7. What is this evidence of his or her emotional well-being?

Although as noted above, Nikelle is a good team player, she also seems to work well by herself and is self-motivated to complete tasks. Because Westminster has gone through several transitional times in recent years, Nikelle has needed to be a self-starter with at times only limited support. Nikelle's demeaner and interactions with others is steady, not evidencing swings in moods or level of engagement. She is pleasant, courteous, willing to offer help and support, and willing to step aside when needed.

8. What is the evidence of his or her self-discipline?

In addition to already noted characteristics and accomplisments, Nikelle meets project deadlines and is on time to work. She even manages to plan ahead and bring her lunch to work!

9. Does the individual have a reasonable plan to finance his or her theological education?

Nikelle has already attained scholarship monies and grants to cover tuition and is aware of and has already planned for exploring and applying for other financial assistance as needed.

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Form 1B

Questions for Reflection

Name: Johnson (*family*) Nikelle (*first*) Erin (*middle/natal*)

Reflect on the following questions and then write responses in the space provided (limited to about 275 words).

1. Describe yourself as a person.

I am faithful and committed, flexible and creative. I have always had a deep love for ministry, and seeing people grow in their relationship with God and with each other. I am quiet and attentive, and appreciate the opportunity to contemplate and learn new things. I am an introvert, so I appreciate some time to myself, but I value good conversations with friends and colleagues.

2. Describe briefly your understanding of what it means to you to be an inquirer. Please include the most important events, experiences and persons that have prompted you to apply to become an inquirer.

To be an inquirer opens up the opportunity to discern more deeply the call to pastoral leadership. I look forward to more opportunities to learn and grow.

I have spent the last eight years in the ministry of Christian Education, mostly with children and youth. Over the last few years, I have been completing classes towards obtaining Educator Certification in the PC(USA). As I have been taking these courses and learning more about worship and educational theories, I've seen how much all the areas of church intertwine. There are aspects of education in worship, in mission, in fellowship, etc. Education/faith formation cannot be confined to one wing of a building. Our congregation has also been in transition, which has opened up opportunities to try and experience new things outside of my current focus in children and youth. I believe I have more that I can offer the whole church.

I've had conversations with friends who have been very encouraging about the possibility of me being in pastoral ministry, including my former pastor/head of staff, who saw potential in me a number of years ago.

3. Write a brief statement of your personal faith describing what you believe about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and your relationship to them.

God is the the creator of the universe, full of power and might, yet kind and loving, loving us deeply and knowing us so well as to know the number of hairs on our heads! God sent his Son Jesus to earth, to show love to us. Jesus not only demonstrated what it means to follow God, but was willing to give up his life for our sins. As Christians God gave the Holy Spirit to guide us and walk with us here on earth. Each (God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit) are part of the one true God, who I am honored to have as part of my life. I am thankful for the love God has shown me, and I desire to share that love with others.

Date: _____ Name: _____ Form 1B

4. What does it mean to you to be Presbyterian?

I love that Presbyterians are rooted in Scripture. God's grace is central to what we believe. I love that Presbyterians take seriously God's call to peace and justice, committed to making a difference in our world today. Being a connectional church allows us to be part of something bigger than ourselves. We are connected to Christians in the past, who's words may still speak to us today, and we are connected to other Christians around the country and the world by our unity in Christ.

5. Describe your current spiritual practices and disciplines.

Regular study and prayer are naturally part of being a Christian Education Director. It not only helps me grow, but helps me in leading and encouraging children and youth in their faith. I find that incorporating centering prayer and/or meditating on scripture is a great way to focus myself before God, and take time to slow down. I work hard to incorporate sabbath opportunities into my regular schedule. I also appreciate friends who help to discern and push me to grow in faith.

Attending corporate worship, and taking some time in personal worship (maybe worship songs in the car) regularly are uplifting and encouraging. I regularly participate in fellowship opportunities at church (including planning some of them). When my schedule allows, I enjoy participating with adult studies/classes as a way to build connections within the body, and learn from others experiences. While I am not as involved in service (outside my job) as I once was, I strongly believe in the importance of mission and service. It allows people the opportunity to meet the needs of others, learn more about themselves, to rely of God, and live in community with other believers.

6. Who/what is your ideal/role model for ministry? What do you expect in your ministry? What aspect of ministry do you find least interesting?

Ministry can look very different depending on the setting. But no matter what the setting, we need remain true to what God is calling us to do. Personally, I see myself working in a congregational setting, either as an associate or solo pastor. I have loved being a part of congregational ministry, and watching people grow in their faith. I would expect to help nurture and guide the church in leading, teaching, planning and executing various aspects of church life. At the moment, I can't think of anything that I don't find specifically interesting, but I know one area I need to grow in is Pastoral Care, and I hope to focus some extra study in this area.

Date: _____ Name: _____ Form 1B

7. What are you doing to maintain your physical and emotional health?

For physical health, I enjoy walking outdoors (and indoors if I have to). I also find that practicing deep breathing and/or meditation on occasion help to balance out any stress. As far as emotional health, I have a friend I check in with a couple times a week for mutual support and prayer. We are both in ministry and understand those challenges. I am also thankful for a cohort group that I meet with monthly who also know what it is like to do educational ministry in the church, support each other, and encourage each other to grow and learn, both personally and professionally.

8. Comment on what have been/are some of your more meaningful interests and hobbies.

I appreciate opportunities to be creative in many different ways. It is a way to relax and do something totally different than I am regularly doing. I especially enjoy quilting and knitting, but have tried a number of different ways to be creative, and also have fun trying new ones.

From the time I was really little, I have aways loved reading. Mystery, suspense and thrillers are probably my favorite genres, but I also enjoy historical fiction and trying a variety of types (book clubs are great for this).

9. After completing and reviewing Form 1C of this application to be received as an inquirer, briefly discuss how you plan to finance your theological education.

I am thankful to have received a Promise for Parish Ministry Scholarship from UPSem, which will cover tuition plus some additional expenses. I plan to apply or request other support from churches, denominational scholarships, etc. As a final resort, I will apply for loans through FAFSA. I also hope to seek possible part-time employment to help cover some expenses.

Signature: Nikelle E. Johnson _____ 04/21/2021
(date)

Date: 04/21/2021

Form 1A

Application to be Enrolled by Presbytery as an Inquirer

Name of applicant: Johnson (family) Nikelle (first) Erin (middle/natal)

Current address: 5000 Nurmi Drive (street) Midland (city) MI (state) 48640 (zip)

Main phone: 989-430-5508 (cell) Mobile (h/o/m) Alt phone: _____ Home (h/o/m)

Email: nejohnson23@gmail.com

Permanent address: _____ (if same, write 'same') (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Gender: _____ Date of birth: 09/23 Race/Ethnicity: _____

Current church membership: Westminster Presbyterian Church (name of church)

Address: 103 East Midland Street (street) Bay City (city) MI (state) 48706 (zip)

Date received as a member: 6/25/2017 Number of members: 364

Have you ever applied to a presbytery to be enrolled as an inquirer or candidate? No

If yes, was enrolled as: _____ in _____ presbytery

From _____ to _____

In what church occupation are you interested in at this time? pastor/educator (e.g. pastor, youth minister, mission worker, educator)

Present or most recent school attended: Western Theological Seminary

Location: Holland, MI Date of graduation: 5/2001

Applicant's Statement

I hereby apply to be enrolled by Lake Huron (presbytery name) Presbytery as an inquirer.

☑ I certify no civil, criminal, ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained or is pending against me.

☐ I am unable to make the above certification. I offer instead on the attachment a description of the complaint and/or outcome of the situation with explanatory comments.

I certify that the above statement and other information in this application are true and correct. I promise to participate diligently and wholeheartedly with the session and the presbytery in exploring my vocation.

Applicant's signature: Nikelle E. Johnson 4/21/2021 (date)

Date: _____ Name: _____ Form 1A

Family Situation

Current marital status: Single Ages of any children in the home: n/a

Are you and your household members open to the possibility of relocation in conjunction with theological studies and/or accepting a ministry position? Yes

If you are limited in your ability to relocate, please describe on the following lines:

n/a

Church Background

Year of baptism: 1987 (?) Year of your confirmation/profession of faith: 1990 (?)

Most recent church affiliations (include up to three):	Dates of participation:
Chapel Lane Presbyterian (Midland, MI)	6/2013-2/2017
Midland Reformed Church (Midland, MI)	6/2008-1/2017
Voice Of Calvary Fellowship (Jackson, Mississippi)	2001-2008

Have you been ordained as a ruling elder in the PC(U.S.A.)? No Date: _____

Have you been ordained as a deacon in the PC(U.S.A.)? No Date: _____

Have you been ordained in another denomination? Yes Date: 2009 (ish)

If so, name of denomination: Reformed Church in America Office: Deacon

List up to five areas of involvement in the life and mission of the church, either as a participant or leader, that are most significant in your sense of call to the role of teaching elder. Mark current involvements with an asterisk.

Area of involvement:	Role:
*Lead youth & children's programs for 8.5 years.	Leader
Have always felt at home in the church, and have served in many capaciti	Participant
*assisted in greater role within the church during a pastoral transistion, ou	Leader
*Have been completing Educator Certification classes- feel call to more	Participant
*GLAPCE President and APCE member- connecting with other educators	Leader

Date: _____ Name: _____ Form 1A

Academic Information

List the academic institutions you have attended, beginning with college, and supply the information requested in each column. If you are currently pursing an educational program, indicate your academic classification in the final column.

Institution	Dates attended	Program/major	GPA	Diploma/degree
Hope College	1995-1999	Humanities/Relig.	2.67	BA
Western Theo. Seminary	1999-2001	Religious Educ.	2.95	MRE

Briefly describe your academic interests/gifts by completing the following table:

	Subjects in which you did your best academic work:	Subjects in which you did less well:
College:	Religion/Ed. Psych.	Foundations of Music/ Math
Graduate school:	Educ. Min.- Youth Min, Church Y	Bib. Exeg. more challenging
Professional school:		
Other training:		

Have you ever had an individualized educational program (IEP)? No

If so, what accommodations did the IEP include?
n/a

On the space provided, list your academic honors, awards, special recognitions, sports, organizations and extracurricular activities that have been most meaningful:
At WTS served on Student Council. At Hope was co-editor for the yearbook/ served on the leadership team of the Fellowship of Christian Students.

Occupational History

Beginning with your current or most recent position, list all full time or part time jobs in which you have been employed. Include the five most, recent up to the past 20 years. Place a PT beside the title of part time jobs.

Job title	Dates	What did you enjoy most?	What did you enjoy least?
Dir. of CE & Youth	3/17-present PT	Buidling relationships	time gather. supplies
Director of CE	7/13-2/17 PT	Building relationships	not enough time
Preschool Teacher	6/14-2/17 PT	Watching children gro	spec. state require.
Montessori Teach/ai	6/08-7/13 (PT)	Watching children gro	cleaning
Exec. Assistant	6/06-5/08	Help. new homeowne	lots of paperwork

Date: _____ Name: _____ Form 1A

References

References should include at least two of the following: someone from your church; a former employer; a peer; or a former professor or school administrator.

Name: RevDr Myers Rhonda
(title) (family) (first) (middle/natal)

Current address: 210 Morris Ave Springfield NJ 07081
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Main phone: 973-255-0846 Mobile *(h/o/m)* Alt phone: _____ Home *(h/o/m)*

Email: revrhon@aol.com

How long have you known this person, and in what capacity? 8 years, Former Head of Staff/Pastor

Name: Rev. Pedersen Rachel
(title) (family) (first) (middle/natal)

Current address: 625 Montgomery Bryn Mawr PA 19010
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Main phone: 208-521-2592 Mobile *(h/o/m)* Alt phone: _____ Home *(h/o/m)*

Email: RachelPedersen@bmpc.org

How long have you known this person, and in what capacity? 2+ years, friend & colleague

Name: Rev. Williams Linda
(title) (family) (first) (middle/natal)

Current address: 4099 Creekwood Circle Bay City MI 48706
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Main phone: 717-377-6011 Mobile *(h/o/m)* Alt phone: _____ Home *(h/o/m)*

Email: lindabergsengwilliams@yahoo.com

How long have you known this person, and in what capacity? 4 years, co-worker