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# Ordination Paper

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## 3 PART ONE

4 MY FAITH STORY5 AND6 SENSE OF CALLING

7 I was born into a Christian home. Our church home was First Baptist Church of  
8 Randolph, MA (FBC Randolph). Most of my childhood memories in some way involve this  
9 church. I really do not remember a time when I was without a faith in Jesus as my friend and a  
10 realization of Him as God.

11 As I grew older, I learned that God does not have grandchildren. I needed to have a  
12 personal relationship with Jesus and to trust in Him. Having trusted in Jesus as my savior, at  
13 twelve years of age, I was baptized on December 18, 1971 by my Pastor the Rev. Dr. Edwin  
14 Moyer at FBC Randolph.

15 I would describe my faith journey as incremental. While I never remember a time of  
16 doubting my faith, I have had many times when I experienced crisis points that became growth  
17 points. These were times when, although I might have been in a personal or existential crisis,  
18 my God was with me and showed himself to be faithful and to be teaching me lessons. Some  
19 lessons had to be repeated until I learned, grew, and became mature in Him.

20 By the time I was fourteen, the music I listened to was from the musicals "Godspell,"  
21 and "Jesus Christ, Superstar," and an album of two sermons by the Rev. Dr. Peter Marshall  
22 which were like music to my ears. I had memorized them at one time in my life. These were my

23 passions for much of my teenage years. As I grew older, I began giving children's sermons  
24 during morning worship. I started teaching Sunday School when I was a freshman in high school  
25 because the teenagers had our classes on Thursday evenings, so I was available during the  
26 Sunday School hour to teach.

27 I was the first in my family to go to college and I started my college career at Barrington  
28 College in Barrington, Rhode Island. It was during that time that I felt that God might be calling  
29 me to go into full time Christian ministry. As I was walking to one of my classes one day after  
30 chapel, I sensed within my spirit that God was wanting me to change my major from Psychology  
31 to Biblical Studies and preach the Word. On the following Sunday, when the bus from the local  
32 Baptist church came to pick up anyone who wanted to go to church, I went. On the way, one of  
33 the upper classmen began to talk about his call to ministry and I asked him how I would know if  
34 I was being called into ministry. He simply said, "I don't believe God calls women, but if you say  
35 you are called, I won't argue with you." Thinking that I may have asked the wrong person, I  
36 ended the conversation. Over the years, his words echoed in my mind, and each time God  
37 would remind me of the faint sense of calling that has become more recently a clear conviction.

38 A major growth point in my life was during my Freshman year of college when my  
39 mom called to tell me that Beth Griffin, from FBC Randolph, who had been my sister's close  
40 friend, my Sunday school teacher over the years, and sister in Christ, had a recurrence of cancer  
41 and the church was gathering for a service of healing. Several days later, she died. I struggled  
42 for some time about how this could be. I knew that God could heal, that He does heal, and the  
43 church followed the teaching given to us in the book of James about what to do when someone

44 is sick. But Beth died. I started going home on weekends from Barrington, and by the end of the  
45 semester, I decided to transfer from Barrington college to Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy. I  
46 felt the need to be closer to home, and closer to my church family. I had several conversations  
47 with Pastor Moyer about Beth's death and what it meant that the church had gathered, had  
48 anointed her with oil, and had prayed for her healing and then she died. He told me that during  
49 that service one could see that her healing had come. She was ready to go home to be with the  
50 Lord, ready to accept the outcome, and was at total peace by the end of the service in body,  
51 mind and spirit. A seed was planted that day for a lesson I would learn many years later about  
52 God's perfect timing and the unique way in which He works out His will for each of His children  
53 at the end of their earthly life.

54 At Eastern Nazarene College (ENC), I declared a double major in Christian Education and  
55 Psychology. I might have gone on to seminary after college if I did not make my next life-  
56 changing choice.

57 I married Steven in November of 1979 while I was still a student at ENC. By the Spring of  
58 1980 I was pregnant with our first child and had to drop my classes because of extreme nausea  
59 that lasted for the next nine months. By December of 1981 our second child was born. The  
60 marriage was filled with abuse and instability. By 1984, he had left the marriage and I was the  
61 single parent of two children under four years of age. I had no income and I was totally reliant  
62 upon God to meet all our needs. God was faithful. Sometimes God used a church member who  
63 showed up with a bag of groceries, or a stranger who sent a check for the exact amount needed  
64 and a note that read "You don't know me, but God has directed me to help you with this gift."

65 My relationship with God grew stronger each day as I was showered with love and blessings.  
66 Later I learned that the primary blessing stream used by God was the local church of which I  
67 had been a life-long member. That "stranger" had called FBC Randolph asking if there was  
68 anyone in need of financial help. The church gave them my name. These were the growth  
69 points teaching me about how the body of Christ functions in real life situations and how the  
70 wider Church works together as believers are prompted by the Holy Spirit to live obedient lives.

71 I continued to be active at FBC Randolph while living with my parents. They were  
72 always a tremendous source of help and support. By the time my youngest was three, he began  
73 having severe temper tantrums and was being aggressive toward me, his sister, and my mother.  
74 I brought him to a counselor who specialized in working with children who had witnessed  
75 domestic violence. She began to show me how to help him to express his anger in non-violent  
76 ways. The interaction with his counselor, and later with the education system as I advocated for  
77 him to be evaluated for special education, rekindled my interest in psychology and opened a  
78 new interest in education. I had come through what could have been the most difficult period  
79 of my life up to that time. As I look back, I see God's fingerprints all over the events that had  
80 taken place. He taught me lessons about trusting Him and about being content in all  
81 circumstances. During that period of my life, I filed for divorce because I was informed that my  
82 husband had married someone else. I learned many lessons about God's faithfulness and about  
83 the situations in which women find themselves. God brought me into a training ground that  
84 changed my life in ways that I am still learning about, preparing me for yet another chapter.

85 I went back to school and obtained my Bachelor of Arts in psychology with a minor in  
86 elementary education in 1989. While still a student at the University of Massachusetts Boston,  
87 I began dating Ernie. He had shared with me that he was a single parent. He and his ex-wife had  
88 joint custody of their four children, each having them for six months. He had just finished his six  
89 months with them in Boston and had put them on a plane for California to go back to their  
90 mother for their six months with her. We shared about the struggles of being a single parent  
91 and about being a Christian single. He soon joined FBC Randolph and we became active in the  
92 young adult group at the church. Life circumstances forced him to move to Arizona to take  
93 custody of his four children and he made plans to leave for Yuma, Arizona. Before he left, he  
94 asked me to marry him. In October of 1990, I moved to Arizona with my two children. On my  
95 last day at FBC Randolph, Pastor Moyer, who was about to retire, said to me, "When you get to  
96 Arizona, find a Methodist Church, because I don't think you will be happy in the more  
97 conservative churches in Arizona." Ernie had by this time already joined and had become active  
98 in a conservative Baptist church in Yuma, Arizona so began to worship and serve there to the  
99 extent they would allow. I married Ernie in January 1991 and we lived in Arizona for the next 12  
100 years.

101 We moved to Phoenix in 1993, and it was only during the fifteen months that we lived in  
102 Phoenix and belonged to the only American Baptist Church in the metropolitan Phoenix area  
103 that I was fully able to serve. During that time, I preached, taught Sunday School classes, served  
104 Communion, and co-facilitated disability ministries in the church. I drove the wheelchair van  
105 throughout the week for the church. It was during this busy time of service and ministry that I  
106 started seminary at Western Seminary in Scottsdale Arizona in 1994 and attended until spring

107 of 1996. Students were told then that, although we could still obtain our degree, it would not  
108 be from an accredited school because they were to become an independent seminary.

109         During this time, my husband Ernie disclosed to me that he had been having affairs with  
110 other women. After much prayer I felt that it would be best for me to have some time alone  
111 with God. I heard of a job as a counselor in Casa Grande, Arizona. I rented an apartment and  
112 enrolled in the University of Phoenix counseling program. I obtained my Master of Counseling  
113 in 2000 while I was working in a small community counseling agency. Ernie joined me in Casa  
114 Grande, and we remained together until 2002. During this time, I felt God calling me to go back  
115 home to Randolph, MA.

116         The Arizona years were rich in ministry experiences, living in total emotional  
117 dependence on God. I had experienced several losses: my mother died very suddenly; my  
118 brother-in law died; then in 2002, just a week before I was due to come back, my brother died  
119 unexpectedly. In addition, my two children had moved back to live with their father in Boston in  
120 1993, and I had only been able to see them for two weeks at a time each year. Yet I knew  
121 between 1993 and 2002 that God wanted me in Arizona, and I trusted Him to take care of  
122 everything happening at home, and He did. God taught me so much about life, about what it  
123 means to be in the desert time, in the dark night of the soul. I learned that God is there with me  
124 every step of the way, and the He always answers prayer, even long-distance prayer.

125         In October 2002 I moved back from Arizona without Ernie. I rejoined FBC Randolph  
126 almost as if I had never left. Both the church and I had both been through many life changing  
127 experiences. It would take time for me to become humble and teachable enough to be used by

128 God again. Since returning to FBC Randolph I have worn many hats with many titles. When the  
129 pastor the Rev. Dr. Leland Clarke, resigned his position, the Church called the Rev. Dr. Roger  
130 Haber to be our transitional pastor. During the eleven-month search process I served as God  
131 enabled me. I preached weekly at first, then once a month, and during the seasons of Advent  
132 and Lent. In addition, I was responsible for pastoral care, and I officiated at three funerals  
133 within two months.

134 After Pastor Haber came to FBC Randolph I returned to seminary, enrolling at Andover  
135 Newton Theological School. I completed the educational requirements for ordination, including  
136 my field education, which I did at FBC Randolph with Pastor Haber as my Supervisor. During  
137 that time, I was able to introduce a small group program to FBC Randolph for I ran a training for  
138 twelve leaders who began a small group program at the church consisting of 12 small groups.  
139 Some met in homes, some at the church at various times during the week with an emphasis on  
140 fellowship, spiritual growth and outreach.

141 Since then, I have led a Monday morning Bible study, facilitated Women's Ministry,  
142 including providing the teaching time for a retreat entitled "Women of Confidence." I recruited  
143 a new leader to take the Monday morning Bible study, freeing me up to do other things.

144 Currently, I am working full time as a family clinician for Bay State Community Services.  
145 At FBC Randolph I co-facilitate the discipleship class on Sunday morning, and serve as a part of  
146 the pastoral ministry team. Responsibilities include assisting with the weekly morning worship,  
147 and with pastoral care as needed, and preaching in rotation with the other pastors. In addition,  
148 I work with a team of women to facilitate Women's Ministries, including a quarterly luncheon



149 with a devotional time, and providing communication about and promoting fellowship and  
150 service opportunities within the community and denomination. I have come full circle. The  
151 haunting voice from the bus that “God does not call women” has been replaced by the moving  
152 of the Holy Spirit in my heart saying to me “I have called you. let’s move forward for you have  
153 been prepared.” I believe that God is calling me to and has prepared me for the work of  
154 intentional interim ministry, helping to prepare churches who to welcome their settled pastor.

## 155 PART TWO

### 156 THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

#### 157 GOD

158 I believe that there is only one God and that God has always been, with no beginning  
159 and no end. God is the creator of all that there is, having at His disposal the very laws of  
160 physics and nature that He also designed and created. God is Holy and there is no imperfection  
161 or flaw within Him. Everything was created perfect in its original state. I believe that God is all  
162 knowing, all powerful, and that all of God is present everywhere all the time. I believe that God  
163 transcends gender restrictions and the limitations of gender language. I believe God is perfectly  
164 loving, just and merciful, and these characteristics of God are balanced in perfection.

165 While there is only one God, there are three persons who are all totally and completely  
166 God. In the core of their identity all three are fully God and at the same time, all three have  
167 their own unique characteristics. The Father is the first person of the Trinity. He is Holy and fully  
168 God in his identity. This is the personal God to whom I can go to in prayer and who provides  
169 comfort and guidance as well as discipline to all who believe in Him.

Jesus

170  
171 I believe that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, The Son. He is fully God. Jesus  
172 was born as a baby becoming human in form. His humanity came from his mother Mary, and  
173 He was conceived by the action of the Holy Spirit. I cannot begin to explain how, but I can tell  
174 you why. I believe that Jesus' birth represents the literal point in time of the entrance of God  
175 into the history of the World and into the fullness of human experience.

176 Jesus was a Jewish child. As He grew, there was always something special about Him  
177 that those who were looking could see. Over time He chose his disciples and while He was with  
178 them, He taught them with words and by example as well as training them to do His work by  
179 sending them out to preach, pray and heal.

180 He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and raised the dead to  
181 life again. His message was one of radical love, of doing the law in spirit. He also taught that the  
182 only way to get to the Father is through faith in Him.

183 After a short three-year earthly ministry, Jesus was crucified, died and put into a  
184 borrowed tomb. Three days later, as He had promised His followers, He rose up from the grave,  
185 later ascending into Heaven. I believe that Jesus, who is the Christ, now sits at the right hand of  
186 God. Jesus' death on the cross paid the penalty required for sin. His resurrection from the dead  
187 conquered the grave and guarantees eternal life for all who put their trust in Him. Before Jesus  
188 ascended into heaven, He promised never to leave His disciples alone. He introduced them to  
189 the Holy Spirit.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT

191  
192 I believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is God and  
193 functions in the life of the believer and the Church in several ways that are unique to the Holy  
194 Spirit. First, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter. For the disciples who had just gone through such a  
195 traumatic loss, this was particularly important. They had lost their Savior on the cross, then,  
196 thinking that they had their friend back after the resurrection, He was leaving them again. The  
197 Holy Spirit is the Comforter for believers today as well, even praying on our behalf when all we  
198 can manage to do is moan or cry out to God.

199 The Holy Spirit is the power supply, both for the new Church, as told in the Book of  
200 Acts, and for every believer in Jesus ever since. The Holy Spirit gives the power to move out in  
201 boldness to be the witness of the Gospel of Jesus as He has commissioned every believer to do.

202 The Holy Spirit lives within every believer in Christ and empowers him/her to grow in  
203 his/her faith. I believe when a person trusts Christ the Holy Spirit begins to work in his/her life  
204 as the Comforter, filling him/ her with peace and empowering him / her to understand and  
205 apply God's word. The Holy Spirit also convicts him / her of sin. The Holy Spirit is the giver of  
206 gifts to all believers such as teaching, preaching, mercy, helping people in need. These gifts of  
207 the Holy Spirit are for the Church to be equipped as a body and to move out as the hands and  
208 feet of Jesus into the world. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers believers to move out and fulfill  
209 the commission Jesus gave.

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### HUMANITY

I believe that there was a literal Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, and that the book of Genesis tells us their story of moving from intimacy with God to separation from Him because of their disobedience. This sin resulted in their banishment from the garden where all their needs were provided by God, to a place of enmity with each other and with nature, and to complete separation from God. From that point, people would need to toil and work to get food from the ground. The earth was cursed as well as all who dwell on it. There was no longer an intimate relationship with God, only a void inside which every human being since has known.

### SALVATION

I believe that the fall of human beings from grace in the Garden marked the beginning of the plan of Salvation. This can be seen in Scripture beginning with the creation account and culminating in the cross of Calvary. Throughout the pages of the Bible, God's love for humankind is clear, as is His desire to be in relationship with us. When Jesus came into human history it was for one purpose, to complete the plan of Salvation that had been initiated when sin came into the world in the Garden of Eden.

Jesus was the spotless Lamb of God. He lived a sinless life and as He came to the cross, it became an altar where He sacrificed Himself. He could have denied the accusations of the Jewish leaders, and He had many opportunities to answer the charges brought against Him. Jesus came to the cross willingly because His death and resurrection were the purpose of His human life.



253 be an agent of light, love, truth and grace. The Church is to model for society of what it means  
254 to live a life that is pleasing to God and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Church is to feed the  
255 hungry, visit those who are in prison, clothe the naked, bring the love and mercy of God to the  
256 suffering, and to meet the needs of those who are unable to meet their own needs. Each local  
257 church must discern the calling of God in terms of prioritizing their time and resources for  
258 ministry, including which populations they are called to reach. I believe that the role of the  
259 Church in the world is to be the lighthouse and compass for living. Particularly in the world in  
260 which we live that denies any absolutes and claims everything to be relative, the Church needs  
261 to be stronger than ever. United by our common belief in Christ and the sufficiency of His  
262 redemptive work on Calvary, we must hold forth a standard for world to see. Even in today's  
263 world Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, and salvation is possible through  
264 faith in Him alone.

#### 265 The Ordinances: Baptism and Communion

266 I believe that the Ordinance of Baptism is to be administered to believers and is to be by  
267 complete immersion. We practice believer's baptism because it is an outward profession of the  
268 inward experience of salvation that has already occurred. It is a symbol, a live sermon to all who  
269 witness it, of the death of the individual to sinful self. In addition, the death and burial of Christ  
270 is symbolized as the candidate goes under the water. As the person comes up out of the water  
271 this is symbolic of both the resurrection of Christ and their own new birth in Christ. Baptism is  
272 also solidifying person's connection with the local church.

273 I believe the Ordinance of Communion, consisting of bread and grape juice or wine, is  
274 symbolic of the Body and Blood of Christ and commemorative of the Last Supper Jesus shared  
275 with His disciples on the night he was betrayed. I believe that communion is open to any who  
276 believe in Jesus. It is this common faith and focus of communion which brings us into the sense  
277 of the presence of Christ in our midst, unlike other times of corporate worship. I believe that we  
278 must participate in communion in a manner that is fully focused on the significance of what we  
279 are doing as individuals and as a body.

#### 280 THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES U S A

281 I have been a part of American Baptist Churches for my entire life. Being an American  
282 Baptist is as much a part of my identity as having blue eyes. After leaving the extremely  
283 conservative Baptist environment in most of Arizona, it was like being able to breathe again me  
284 when we moved, to First Baptist of Phoenix, an ABC Church, and again back at FBC Randolph. I  
285 believe that two principles are core to what it means to be an American Baptist: soul freedom,  
286 and autonomy of the local church. I understand soul liberty to be the freedom of every believer  
287 to be led by the Holy Spirit when interpreting Scripture and living out God's word, within the  
288 boundary of sound Hermeneutical practices. During my faith journey, this has empowered my  
289 spiritual growth. Further, I believe that the autonomy of the local church distinctly empowers  
290 local churches. This is expanded and further expressed in the relationship between the local  
291 church and the associations, The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts, and ABCUSA.

292 As an American Baptist pastor, I will adhere to the Code of Ethics. I recognize that this  
293 code keeps clergy accountable professionally, and especially with those whom we serve. As

294 | God gives me opportunity, I will participate whenever possible in the biennial meetings of  
295 | ABCUSA, and in the activities of TABCOM, as I actively serve in the Old Colony Baptist  
296 | Association.

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