

THE COMMUNITY CHURCH
8 Olive Street
Mill Valley, California

February 17, 1977

Reverend Mary Eakin
Committee on the Ministry
c/o United Church of Christ
870 Market St.
San Francisco, Ca. 94102

Dear Mary and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the assistance you have given to the five women who are applying for in-care status from our congregation. I appreciate the generous time allotment the committee has given for the interview on March 4th.

It is my joyful privilege to recommend to the committee that Stacy Cusulos, Cherry Morton, Jody Parsons, Susan Cutshall, and Loey Powell be given in-care status within the Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ. They are members of Community Church and on December 9, 1976 the Board of Directors voted unanimously to recommend them for in-care. They come before you both as individuals called to ministry and as a collective committed to an exciting vision of that ministry. The dialogue with the committee as well as your affirmation of their journey will help move that vision closer to fulfillment.

A member of our congregation expressed appreciation at a church retreat for our "beautiful, odd-ball diversity" here. We do affirm the value of diversity and we have grown an appreciation for the uniqueness of persons. Stacy, Loey, Jody, Susan, and Cherry come from varied backgrounds. Some of their interests merge and overlap, while others go in quite different directions. We celebrate this individuality and affirm their unique gifts for ministry.

Stacy Cusulos is an intensely energetic and creative woman. Her training in psychology, her professional work experience in mental health, and her intuitive sense combine to give Stacy a deep understanding of both persons and groups. On several occasions she has shared her music with us in worship and people here found her expression of the Christian faith supportive as well as challenging. Stacy is a person open to dialogue with her Greek heritage, with her feminist sisters, with folks in the local congregation, with the seminary community, and with the institutional church. To that dialogue she brings convictions, insights, questions, and an ability to listen. A great deal of creativity has come, and will continue to flow from this dialogue Stacy has with herself and others.

Cherry Morton is a compassionate woman who feels deeply for people. She understands the church to be a community of love and seeks to embody and enable that love in her ministry. Drawing on her own experiences, her training in sociology, and her knowledge of the Bible, she has developed a set of perceptive, analytical tools that are much needed in the church today if it is to carry out an effective ministry to society. During this current academic year Cherry is working with the Gray Panthers in Berkeley and in that setting, developing her skills at community organization.

Susan Cutshall is a sensitive woman with a deep interest in developing relationships which enhance the self and build community. In addition to sharing her music in worship at Community Church, Susan was part of the leadership team at the Conference Family Camp last year. Her job at San Francisco Theological Seminary for the past two years has been an occasion where Susan has enabled prospective students to see the possibilities for growth at the Seminary; helped the Seminary be more aware of the needs of the students, and interpreted the work of SFTS to local congregations. This experience, along with Susan's own spiritual journey, have led her to the place where she clearly sees the outline of a ministry within the church.

Loey Powell is a perceptive woman who possesses considerable ability with several media for communication. Her thinking is a refreshing balance of the critical and constructive. She is appreciative of and committed to a community of persons within the United Church of Christ and has come to see a ministry identified with the UCC. On Christmas Eve Loey, along with two other people, created and performed a mine-dance accompaniment to a presentation of the birth story. She also handles verbal and written communication very well and currently edits an excellent newsletter for the Office of Women's Affairs at the Graduate Theological Union. Loey has helped create an effective slide show that presents the struggle women have had within the church. Combining her media skills with her understanding of social issues and her Christian faith, Loey is able to carry on a ministry of education that seeks change.

Jody Parsons is a woman with a clear understanding of her personal faith and how that faith relates to the larger economic-political structures of society. Her ministry with the Joint Strategy and Action Commission has enabled her to develop outstanding competence in the area of corporate responsibility. Jody has both the temperament and the professional skills to bring together people from the local congregation, denominational structures, and the corporate world in a creative fashion. She not only has a clear perception of the mission of the church, but Jody enables others to develop a deeper understanding of mission for themselves. Her past involvement with the church as well as her current work have given her a sense of the role the local congregation can play in the ministry with corporate structures.

These five persons come before you as individuals and we at Community Church celebrate their individual gifts for ministry. We also place a high value on "the community" here and so we celebrate the collective sense of ministry they share together. It was on Pentecost Sunday that they joined Community Church, and we sense in them some-

thing of the new wind that is blowing through the church in these days. Out of the painful struggle with sexist academic and ecclesiastical structures they have grown a sense of solidarity with one another and out of their collectivity there is emerging an exciting vision of ministry. To paraphrase Paul: Out of their suffering has come the strength to endure and out of endurance has come courage and out of that courage arises a hope that will be a renewing force within church and society. Stacy, Loey, Susan, Cherry, and Jody are exploring new territory. We are eager to support their search - to join with them whenever possible. We are confident they will open up new ways for the church to minister in these times. Speaking for our Board of Directors, I enthusiastically recommend that your grant in-care status to these fine people.

Thank you again for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Bill Eichhorn

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