

October 26, 1977

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I am writing you in support of the concept of ordaining Stacy Cusulos, Jody Parsons and Loey Powell as individuals collectively.

My support of their ordination process grows out of my own experience of ministry. I affirm this ordination process as a visible way of symbolizing the reality of how the tasks of ministry are performed.

I am a member of a team of ministers. That team is called the conference staff. Within that team there is support, trust, collegiality, and affection. Operating as a team, we do more than we could do as five individuals working full-time. We share ideas, insights and skills with each other. We challenge each other to take time for family and partners. We share our faith journeys. The interaction between us energizes us and gives me the support and strength I need to perform the tasks of ministry. I rejoice that Stacy, Jody and Loey are making visible in the ordination process, a reality that I have profoundly experienced in my own ministry.

As I remember my own ordination, I remember feelings of dis-ease. I felt uncomfortable standing alone as I was ordained, because so many folks had been and were so integral to my calling that they should have been standing their with me. My paper, while it was written out of my own experience, reflected the ways that a host of people had shared with me.

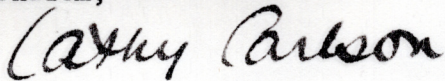
- Jerry Lowe, minister of the First United Methodist Church of Napa trusted me as a minister when I found it hard to trust myself. He gave me the gift of confidence.
- Carolyn Roberts and I had spent months talking about the nature of God. She helped me name the reality that I experienced as God. She gave me the gift of grounding what I experienced in the core of my being.
- Michael, my husband, shared his love of Old Testament with me and opened up the Scriptures in such a way that the Bible became my history, my story and the Biblical people became my people.

- And of course, two people, my parents, gave me the gift of life.

The ordination of Stacy, Loey and Jody will make manifest the reality that we come to ministry because of the incredible gifts that others have given us. The gifts that they have given to each other can be celebrated, and representative of the gifts that a multitude have given them.

My thoughts and prayers are with you as you deliberate the appropriateness of their ordination. I find their process exciting -- an indication that there is a new wind blowing in our lives.

Shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cathy Carlson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Catherine Ann Carlson