

October 27, 1977

To the Committee on Ministry:

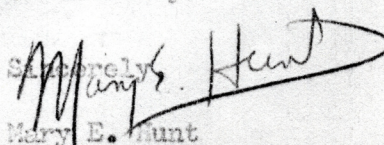
The ordination of Stacy Cuzales, Jody Parsons and Loey Powell presents you with an unparalleled opportunity to explore and articulate essential Christian teachings in light of the ever evolving social situation. I applaud your careful attention and urge your continued cooperation in this exciting process.

Ordination is the Christian community's way of affirming and lifting up the gifts and training of certain members. It is meant to make those gifts available to all persons so that God's presence may be made manifest. It is a way to enable the ordained to empower others to recognize and exercise their own gifts, a powerful sign of God's way of working in the world, through, with and in all of us.

Long before Stacy, Jody and Loey answered their individual calls to ordained ministry in the UCC they were taught that Christianity is a covenant tradition, a people bonded to one another because of a communal covenant with God. They experienced the strength and the challenge of bonding in solidarity with women and other oppressed minorities in a world where such bonds are systematically destroyed. They recognized the integral connection between their Christian education and their experience as full human persons in community.

It is this rich insight into the Christian faith as covenanted challenge that these women bring to their ministry. Their intention to be ordained together, each answering the call of God in her unique way, while all are committed to and accountable for the corporate project, is a symbolic and existential invitation. It is a symbolic invitation to all of us to live according to and aware of our status as covenantal beings. This is what one of the early prophets had in mind: "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them... and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." (Ezekiel 11: 19,21) It is an existential invitation to us to move slowly but deliberately toward models of shared leadership and mutual support.

I am mindful of how much Stacy, Jody and Loey have taught all of us through their ordination process. They have raised the difficult questions of faith and practice, and have attempted to translate one into the other. As you are well aware, this is not an easy job when the faith participates in mystery and the practice too often in contradiction. This can only foreshadow the blessings of their ministry.


Sincerely,
Mary E. Hunt

PhD Candidate, Graduate Theological Union