



First Congregational Church

1985 Louis Road, Palo Alto, California 94303

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Committee on the Ministry
Golden Gate Association

Dear Friends,

The Committee on Women in Church and Society affirms the concept of individuals being ordained collectively, and gives full support to Stacy Cusulos, Jody Parsons and Loey Powell as they seek to bring that concept to fruition.

At this point in the history of the United Church of Christ, these three women are exploring a new vista in the time-honored process of ordination. Behind the ordination process lies the assumption of a call which comes to the individual. Stacy, Loey and Jody affirm their individual calls. As members of this Committee, we have experienced the reality of their calls.

In their workings together, these women have struggled to come to an understanding and expression of faith that each can affirm. They are seeking to affirm their individual faith by recognizing that faith must be shared in community. In seeking to be ordained collectively, they are celebrating the sharing of that faith. They are symbolizing their commitment to a particular style of ministry.

Ordination itself is that rite by which one's call is affirmed and recognized within the church structure. It is covenantal in character. Ordination is not only based on the affirmation of a particular relationship between God and the individual, but also on one's relationship to a given community. Ordination by its very nature necessitates a community to be both ministered with as well as ministered to.

Every year in the church calendar, we are reminded that Pentecost was that time when the Spirit of God breathed upon the followers of Jesus. Certainly this could be viewed as the first ordination into the Christian ministry. It was an ordination that took place simultaneously, among a number of individuals of faith. The Gospels and the Book of Acts suggest that these individuals were people who had shared together their questions, their faith experiences, and their individual and corporate response to those faith experiences. The three women seeking to be ordained are following the Pentecostal model.

When the Pilgrims left Lyden, Holland for the new world, their pastor, John Robinson, reminded them that the Spirit of God "has more truth and light to break forth out of (the) holy word." The ordination of these three women collectively may be seen as God's spirit breaking forth with new possibility.

The ordination may be viewed as a symbol of their vision of what it means to be in community, and in a covenantal relationship with those committed to responding to God's call.

We rejoice that their gifts of ministry have been shared with us. We pray that through their entry into ordained ministry, their gifts may be shared and may enrich the entire body of Christ.

In faith,

Carolyn Roberts

Carolyn Roberts
Associate Minister
Committee on Women
in Church and Society

Cathy Carlson	Jody Parsons
Stacy Cusulos	Loey Powell
Anne Eichhorn	Arlene Page
Kathleen Fletcher	Judith Pruess
Jackie Kortright	Marilyn Watts
Andrea Youngdahl	