

**Committee on Preparation for Ministry  
Presbytery of San Francisco  
January 31, 2012**

**Action Items** – These items will be discussed and voted on during the meeting.

**REQUEST TO ENROLL AS CANDIDATE**

1. **Brandon Mills** – First, San Leandro

**MOTION:** That **Brandon Mills** be enrolled as a Candidate for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, effective November 2, 2011. (See [CPM 2-1](#) for MEW.)

2. **Terra Pennington** – Mission Bay Community, San Francisco

**MOTION:** That **Terra Pennington** be enrolled as a Candidate for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, effective December 7, 2011. (See [CPM 3-1](#) for MEW.)

*Notes: A “MEW” is written by each person in our preparation for ministry process to summarize his/her **M**otive for seeking ministry, **E**xperience of faith and previous **W**ork in the church. A brief version of the MEW is presented to the presbytery as an introduction of each candidate.*

*According to our policies, Presbytery shall examine the Inquirer with respect to only his or her Christian faith, forms of ministry undertaken and motives for seeking the ministry.*

**Omnibus Motion** – These motions are included in the block vote taken early in the meeting.

1. That Presbytery enroll Irma Meza from First Richmond as an Inquirer, effective November 2, 2011.
2. That Presbytery enroll Jamieson Prevoznak from St. Johns San Francisco as an Inquirer, effective January 4, 2012. He attends San Francisco Theological Seminary.

**Information** –

1. The following have withdrawn from the process, per their request, effective January 31, 2012:
  - Thomas Brown; First Berkeley
  - Terry Dwyer; First Berkeley
  - Brent James; Menlo Park
2. The following have had an annual consultation with CPM:
  - Susan Benton; Menlo Park; November 2, 2011
  - Joshua Ralston; First Berkeley; January 4, 2012
  - Kelsey Woodruff; Menlo Park; December 7, 2011
3. The following were found certified ready for examination by CPM:
  - Daniel Carlson; First Berkeley; November 2, 2011
  - Krista Carlson; First Berkeley; November 2, 2011

**Brandon Mills**  
**M.E.W. (Candidate)**

I grew up attending church with my family and first began to learn about God in Sunday School. As I grew older in the church, I was drawn to the youth group and the sense of community that I found there. I was an active participant in youth group, in mission trips and in smaller Bible studies and when the associate pastor asked me if I would like to join the church, I said yes. Since I had not been baptized as an infant, I had the experience of being baptized while a freshman in high school. This experience was personally moving for me and may be why I consider administering the sacrament of baptism as a pastor a real privilege.

As I began college, I sought out a Christian fellowship and found one at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley. I took part in the college ministry, and volunteered with the middle school group throughout my time at Cal. It was a joy to talk with them about their lives, to watch the students grow spiritually, and to lead them in Bible study. I also benefited from strong bonds were also formed among the youth team; there is something about laboring in ministry alongside others that I find particularly satisfying.

I was encouraged by the youth director to work at Westminster Woods that summer, a place that had been very significant to me in high school, but one that I had not been much involved with since. The time was mentally and physically exhausting, and yet, that summer was also when I fell in love with youth ministry and surrendered myself to God's will, no matter where he would lead me.

Over the next few years I worked in a variety of ministry settings including returning a second summer to Westminster Woods, working as an administrative assistant at First Pres Berkeley, and as Director of Christian Education at the Presbyterian Church in Red Bluff. Meanwhile, I had also felt called to pursue more advanced education and began a program of study with Fuller. When I returned to the Bay Area I began the Mdiv program through their Menlo Park extension while also working part time in the business office at First Pres Berkeley and part time directing the high school group at First Pres San Leandro. This time of ministry was a time of challenges and disappointments as well as a time of great joy and excitement. Ultimately I felt called to focus more energy on my studies and relocated south to Pasadena to finish my program at Fuller's main campus. My time in Pasadena was a great time of growth for me. I enjoyed being more connected to campus life and interning at Silverlake Community Church in Los Angeles. My time at Silverlake was also a time of building confidence in my pastoral abilities as I explored new areas of ministry and developed my gifts.

During my time in Pasadena I felt a call toward returning to Westminster Woods and served as the Staff Chaplain this past summer, a role I describe as a "counselor for the counselors". I also had an opportunity to hone my counseling skills this past Fall as I completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Sutter Medical Center in Sacramento. The program was deeply enriching, learning about people and illness as well as developing my own pastoral identity, building onto my confidence in my role as pastor and offering care and support to the people in my charge.

Through my faith journey I have developed a great love for God's church. My years working in the church and studying in seminary have also shown me that God has blessed me with many gifts for ministry. I hear God calling me into ministry to serve the church and to walk alongside people as they journey through life, offering them support and encouragement where I can. As I continue on in my journey toward ordination I look forward to discerning what specific ministry God is calling me toward.

**Terra Pennington  
M.E.W.**

Motivation for Seeking Ministry

I wish to be ordained as a teaching elder to be able to facilitate spiritual development through teaching, preaching and the administration of sacraments. Throughout my life I have been drawn to ministry. The sense of call to ordained ministry happened while I was a medical student. Passing through a season of illness, gave me a special appreciation for the role that an ordained minister has. The major events that led to my sense of call to ordained ministry started with conversations with professors and other students about spirituality and illness. Both my congregation as well as my campus ministry leaders began to ask if I had ever thought about exploring the possibility of ordained ministry. I had also started to feel that God might be calling me in a new direction. After spending one year in a discernment process I decided to leave medical school and take steps towards ordained ministry. Another confirmation occurred when the campus ministry leaders of our Christian Medical Association invited me to serve as a chaplain for the following year. This created a time for further discernment about what it might mean to be able to contribute to this role as an ordained minister who could not only bring pastoral care but also provide a sense of God's presence through preaching, teaching and the administration of the sacraments. The different phases of discernment, both personal and communal, have led to my desire to move towards ordination as a teaching elder.

Experience of Faith

From an early age I have had a sense of the presence of God. Belonging to a church surrounded by people of faith who fulfilled their commitment to nurture me gave me a secure foundation that would lead to the time when I was able to make this faith my own. Attending a retreat while in my early teens became a turning point for me. I realized the importance of personally engaging with my faith beyond church attendance. In high school I began helping with the middle school program. This was another turning point for me, to be able to share what I had learned and to act as a mentor. The next event in my faith journey was during my first semester at Seattle Pacific University. I was presented with different ways of interpreting the scriptures and issues like the ordination of women. These ideas were in direct opposition with what I had grown up believing. It was at this point that I began to attend a PCUSA church. There I found a place where questions were encouraged and relationships with God were viewed as a journey not a singular event. Being able to approach the bible from an intellectual perspective and begin a part of a congregation where education of ministers was highly valued changed the way I viewed the church as a whole as well as my relationship with God. During medical school I encountered another turning point in my journey. During this season of my life I experienced circumstances that caused me to examine again where God might be present in my life and how I might be part of God's presence in the life of others. Walking through this part of my journey with the support of my pastor and congregation gave meaning in a new way of the personal impact preaching, teaching and the administration of the sacraments can have intellectually and on the church as a whole.

Work in the Church

Most recently, my work has been as a pastoral associate-in-residence at Arch Street Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) and its sister congregation, Broad Street Ministry. Arch Street has provided a chance to explore the tasks of a minister in a traditional environment. Participating in a wide range of activities, including worship leadership, pastoral care, coordinating monthly community activities and attending meetings both of the local staff and those of the presbytery have given me the opportunity to further discern my call. Broad Street Ministry (BSM), which provides a wide range of service for the most vulnerable in our society, has given me unique opportunities to experience the role of minister as a leader in social justice. My work includes coordinating monthly young adult events in collaboration with social services to provide HIV testing and a safe place to experience being in community with one another. Every week I have the opportunity to be a pastoral presence at the BSM "Breaking Bread" program where services are provided for the hungry and those living outside.