

Jeff Bergeson's Biographical Statement for the Muskingum Valley Presbytery

I was born and raised in Connecticut. My parents have been divorced for most of my life. Growing up, I primarily lived with my dad and step-mom. I have an older sister, a younger sister, and two younger half-siblings. My siblings and I were all raised as Christian Scientists, and I believed and practiced the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy my whole life up through high school. College was a time of moratorium for me. More out of apathy than intentional decision, I began to drift away from Christian Science. Then, just after my sophomore year, during the summer of 2001, I was in the proverbial pit. I had returned to Connecticut for the summer, but my then girlfriend from Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) broke up with me. I was devastated. To make a long story short, by the grace of God through a co-worker sharing the gospel with me, I accepted Jesus Christ that summer.

In the Fall, I returned to campus with my newfound faith but no direction. God provided by immediately connecting me to CCO (Coalition for Christian Outreach) Campus Ministry staff at OWU. Through their faithfulness and commitment to discipling students, I grew in my faith by leaps and bounds. Among other things, they taught me that all things belong to God, and God is redeeming every area of life (cf. Col 1:15-20). I was hungry to learn how to follow Jesus, and they showed me what it looked like to begin thinking about living faithfully in all areas of life.

I was baptized in January of 2003, I graduated in May of 2003, and got engaged to a godly Christian woman that July. Kelly and I married in 2004, and we moved to the Boston area for my wife to pursue a Master's degree in Social Work. Through our involvement in a local congregation there and my own personal reading and discussions, I continued to grow. As my wife was completing her degree, we sensed God's call for me to campus ministry. I was hired by the CCO in 2006, and we moved back to Ohio. Throughout those four years of campus ministry at Kenyon College (2006-2010), God molded me in ways I had not anticipated when I began, teaching me to trust him, and shaping me for pastoral ministry. The Holy Spirit has continued to cultivate my faith and prepare me for pastoral ministry during my time at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, both through the seminary and others. I did not take for granted my time at seminary. I was very intentional about trying to balance work and family, not wanting to neglect either, which is why I was a full-time student on the four-year-plan, instead of the three-year-plan. I love Jesus, and I want to glorify him in all my work, play, rest and relationships.

My wife and I are happily married and just celebrated our ten-year anniversary. Our marriage is rooted in Jesus Christ and his love for us. We have learned much about faithfulness and forgiveness during our time of marriage. I love my wife very much; she is my best friend and dearest sister in Christ. I look forward to continuing to grow with her in faith and marriage. We have three children. Our first two children were born in Ohio during our years of campus ministry, and our third was born in Pittsburgh during my time in seminary. We have a seven-year-old daughter, a six-year-old son, and a two-year-old daughter. I have learned much about our Heavenly Father and his own loving and gracious dealings with us from my own experience as a father. My children bring me great joy, and it's been amazing to watch them develop and begin to learn of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

I believe Jesus is calling me to be a Teaching Elder. I believe he has given me gifts for just such a calling. I love Jesus, I love people, and I love the Bible. He has given me a heart that loves people and a passion to share his love with them. Essentially, he has given me a pastor's heart. He has also given me the ability to comprehend and bear witness to him. That is, he has given me a preacher's mind. In hindsight, I see that he has been preparing me for this for a long time, but I was first aware of God's call (i.e. inward call) and how he was preparing me for

pastoral ministry during my time doing campus ministry, at which time I also started to receive confirmation from others (i.e. outward call).

I believe our Lord Jesus has called me to love his Church and to be a shepherd within his Church, preaching his gospel, and calling people to—and showing people how to—follow him in faithfulness, holiness, and humility. Furthermore, I believe that Jesus is calling me to do this as a Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). I believe the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ has been and will continue to shape me for—and by—this call on my life, to the glory of God our Father. This is not something I am endeavoring to enter into by my own means or desire. I am simply trying to be obedient to my Lord and Savior, and as far as I can tell, he is choosing me to enter this role in and for his Church. While this is daunting, I am joyfully pursuing this call.

Jeff Bergeson's Statement of Faith

I believe Jesus is Lord, and, therefore, I believe in the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, who, by his Spirit and Word, created everything good and in love. The Triune LORD specially created humans in his image and likeness to rule and care for the world, in relationship with him and in obedience to his holy and loving will. Instead, humans went their own way, and all of creation has suffered the curse because of our sin. God created humans to be in loving, unhindered relationship with him, other humans, themselves, and the rest of creation, but sin has separated us from God, corrupted all of creation, and negatively affects all relationships.

I believe that the Blessed Trinity, who is loving, merciful, holy, and just, was unwilling to let us remain separated from him forever or to ignore human sin. Therefore, the LORD set in motion his plan of salvation for the world and called out a covenant people for himself. Through this people, and in the fullness of time, God the Father sent his only Son to be born of a woman by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to live, die, and rise from the dead. The Lord Jesus' incarnate life and amends-making death on the cross demonstrates God's righteousness, grace and his great love for us, and makes it possible for humans to be reconciled to God the Father, saved and forgiven of sins, and justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. His resurrection brings us new life now and assures us of the future resurrection. His ascension to the Father's right hand raised up our human nature to the very throne of God, where, even now, Jesus intercedes for us and makes it possible for humans to receive the Holy Spirit sent in his name by the Father.

I believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in, teaches, guides, convicts, and sanctifies all who believe in Jesus Christ, confessing him as their Lord and Savior and believing in his salvific death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit binds the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" Church together by uniting us with Christ, baptizing us into Jesus' death and raising us to new life in Christ, incorporating believers as the Body of Christ with Christ Jesus as our Head, through whom alone we may approach the Father as our Father by the Spirit and join in the communion of saints proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes again and participating in the divine life, love, and on-going mission of the Trinity in and to the world. I believe that Jesus will return in glory to judge the living and the dead, to completely nullify the curse and its effects, to bring about the consummation of his redeeming work on the cross, and fully usher in his eternal Kingdom on earth.