



## Presbytery of West Virginia Recognizes New Authorized Lay Preachers

December 11, 2025

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** – – The Presbytery of West Virginia recently recognized seven individuals who completed Level 2 of the Authorized Lay Preacher/ Commissioned Pastor Preparation Program and were approved as Authorized Lay Preachers (ALPs).

Those recognized were Chris Alfred, First Presbyterian Church, Parkersburg; Kelly Beckett, First Presbyterian Church, Parkersburg; Nick Blain, First Presbyterian Church, Huntington; Tim Burton, First Presbyterian Church, Kenova; Amy Kesterson, Old Stone Presbyterian Church; Mary Beth Paletta, First Presbyterian Church, Clarksburg; and Jen Runyon, Old Stone Presbyterian Church.



Front row: Susan Sharp Campbell, Mary Beth Paletta, Kelly Beckett, and Jen Runyon.

Back row: Tim Burton, Nick Blain, Amy Kesterson, and Chris Alfred.

Level 2 courses covered the Old Testament; New Testament; Reformed Theology; Biblical Exegesis; Worship; Preaching; Sacraments, Weddings and Funerals; and Appalachia and the Small Church. These courses were held monthly on a Friday night and all-day Saturday, with each course being eight hours in length. Taught by seminary professors and other experts in their fields, the ALPs enjoyed learning from a broad panel of experts with great knowledge.

The new ALPs completed a comprehensive mid-year exam and met with members of the Vocations Committee who agreed they are prepared to serve congregations in the Presbytery of West Virginia as random pulpit supply preachers. Additionally, most are also able to preside at communion.

Tim Burton, who just completed the program, said this educational opportunity taught him many things, but it was being face to face with loving and caring classmates that taught him to be open to the Word and Spirit.

“The ALP/CP program was very important to me as a new Presbyterian preacher. It was like visiting another country and really enjoying the climate and culture but not knowing the language. The program allowed me to be face to face with people who taught me the language

of the Reformed faith and how to be a Presbyterian,” Burton said. “When you visit a new country it’s important, if not essential, to have a tour guide. Susan Sharp Campbell guided me every step of the way through the program. There was never a time when I felt like I didn’t know the direction to go. Susan always knew the way and all I had to do was ask.”

Susan Sharp Campbell, Associate for Educational Ministry for the Presbytery, said, “one of the most rewarding parts of overseeing the ALP/CP Preparation Program, including Level 2, is watching individuals come together and build relationships with one another as they grow in their knowledge and understanding and prepare to use their gifts to share the good news through their preaching.”

Those who have completed Level 2 will begin Level 3 in January 2026, which will prepare them to take the next step and become Commissioned Pastors. The complete list of Authorized Lay Preachers will be included in the end of year mailing from the Presbytery of West Virginia that will be sent to churches in mid-December.

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