

Chris Spotts Ordination
Presbytery of Milwaukee
February 15, 2017

An Insider's Views on Leadership

Christopher Spotts was recently ordained and installed as a Ruling Elder at Crossroads Presbyterian Church in Mequon. He graciously agreed to an interview, which follows:

DH: Please share a few words about how you approached the ordination ceremony spiritually.

CS: Crossroads is in a bit of a difficult situation at the moment. Because I am not ordained as a teaching elder, our Senior Pastor, Scott Hauser, is the only person on staff who can perform baptisms and preside over communion. Unfortunately, Scott is really sick. I have taken on many of Scott's responsibilities in worship, and it was important for us to maintain as much continuity as we could. So, Christian Boyd and Mary Mclung Quam presented the possibility of having the nominating committee and the session nominate me as a ruling elder, who could then be commissioned by the COM to perform the sacramental tasks for which Scott had been responsible before he got sick. The nomination was voted on in a congregational meeting at the end of our 9:00 service, and the ordination and installation were done at the 11:00 service.

In many ways, my approach to the service was no different than any other. I have a great sense of responsibility and love for Crossroads. This is my family, and it is my great privilege to do everything I can to lead them and love them to the best of my ability. I see this ordination and commission as an opportunity for me to do that more fully. I am humbled, and a little bit scared by what all of this means. I take my ordination and commission very seriously, and I want to make sure that I treat them with the respect and honor that they, and Crossroads, deserve.

DH: How did the congregation at Crossroads support you during and after the actual ceremony? What would you recommend to other congregations who ordain members?

CS: The congregation at Crossroads has been so supportive in all of this. After Susan ordained me, the ruling elders (past and present) came forward and laid their hands on me and prayed over me. It was a very moving service for me, and I think for the congregation as well. We have been through a lot at Crossroads in the last five or six years, and this service served as a bit of a reminder for me of how much love Crossroads has for me, and how much love I have for them.

The single greatest encouragement I can give to churches as they ordain their leaders, whether elders, pastors or deacons, is to lift them up in prayer and encourage them as often as you can. The leaders in our churches bear a heavy load. Sometimes you don't see it, but your leaders take very seriously the responsibilities that they have assumed. They want to do well by you, and they want to build you up. I am fortunate. I have never felt so loved and appreciated as I do right now. But, I know that sometimes leaders have to make difficult decisions that don't make people happy. Trust the intent of your leaders; they are trying to be as faithful to the God we all love as they can possibly be.

DH: What were your strongest feelings/thoughts during the occasion and what fueled them?

CS: Honestly? Fear. That sounds bad, I know. But it wasn't a bad kind of fear. It was a fear that grew out of a desire to make sure that I treated this call with the respect and honor it deserved. I was very aware of my own shortcomings, and all the things that should preclude me from

consideration, and I was afraid, and still am, that I will somehow let down the people that I love. That fear doesn't cripple me; it drives me.

DH: What are your goals now that you are ordained?

CS: To get Scott out of the hospital and back where he belongs. I want to do this with him. He is so much more than a colleague for me. He has become one of my closest friends, and I love having him across the hall. I love [interacting] with him at work, and I love leading worship with him. I'll do what I need to do to fill the gap in Scott's absence, and I'll do it for as long as it has to be done, but my greatest hope is that Scott is across the hall again as soon as possible.

DH: Thank you, Chris!

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