

To Whom It May Concern,

I was asked to compose a letter of reference for an individual I have gotten to know over the last 4 years. As pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Dallas Center I have had the unique and humbling privilege to work with people of outstanding character, integrity, and a passion for serving God and the community. Of those people, Shelley Horak stands out as a person that not only embodies these virtues, but does so with infectious energy that empowers and energizes those around her.

When I met Shelley four years ago, it became clear that she had wonderful leadership qualities. She was caring and compassionate, direct and assertive, a great listener and had a heart for serving others. It wasn't long before she was nominated and elected by the congregation to our church ruling body as an elder. This ruling body, called a Session, is responsible for the direction of the life and ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Shelley served for three years as the Stewardship Chairperson, a position that had previously done very little aside from an annual pledge drive. In those three years she expanded the idea of stewardship to include how the congregation manages/uses all of their gifts from God. This new vision became the basis for three of the most successful pledge drives we've had in the life of our congregation.

Under Shelley's leadership, a Time and Talents survey was created to affirm and empower the congregation to use their gifts and abilities for serving God and our community. We continue to use this tool today with growing success.

With a heart for meeting the needs of those in our community at the margins, Shelley helped facilitate the creation of what is now called the Dallas Center Community Auction. All services and goods auctioned off at the event are donated, and every single cent the auction raises is used to meet needs in the community. In the three years this event has been held, each year the amount raised has increased by \$1,000, and more and more people from the community have become involved in this endeavor. This year we raised just over \$5,000.

Where Shelley has been of infinite value to our congregation has been in her helping lead our church through a strategic planning process. She has a keen sense of helping others look at and plan for the future working to live into a discerned Vision. Even after rotating off our church session, she has continued to commit to helping our congregation through this process using her gifts and knowledge.

I cannot say enough how selfless, committed, intelligent, hospitable, and loving Shelley is. Where she goes people are transformed for the best. I am pleased that she is up for this honor, and confess I am not surprised in the least.

Sincerely,

Rev. Adam Smith
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