

John Reis

Bernville PA

Removed from Profile in 2019

This minister's areas of strength in the practice of ministry as I experience them are:

I have known Chris Hart for approximately 7 years. I first met him when he moved from St. Louis to take a position at Bethany Children's Home as associate pastor and later pastor and then moved on to intentional interim ministry. I was serving as director of Bethany Counseling and was the president of the Berks Ministerial Association. Having seen him go through these transitions, I have noticed a quality that Chris possesses that is very important to ministry. No matter what the setting, Chris has the ability to meet people where they are regardless of background, age, economics, and the like. This could be at Bethany, a ministerial meeting or at a local coffee shop. His interactions with people are truly real, nonjudgmental and accepting. This ability to meet people where they are, leads to interactions and relationships that are deeper in nature. He is able to create a safe...

Some areas for improvement in this minister's practice of ministry in my experience of them are:

When I think of first meeting Chris, I think of a diamond: A diamond in the rough. This view may come from the fact that Chris was called to ministry as an older person who had prior life and work experiences. Over the years, I have seen this rough diamond be polished with and by experience in ministry. These experiences helped shape him as a person and as a minister. While I do not see a specific area needed, this continued polishing through additional experiences and challenges will lead to additional growth and help Chris reach his ultimate potential.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this person in ministry

Several years ago, on the way to clergy convocation with Chris, I told him that I felt chilled, not knowing that a week later I would be admitted to the hospital in acute kidney failure. At the convocation, I spent most of my time in bed and ended up leaving early. It is during the convocation, the following week, and during my nine day stay in the hospital that I felt the benefits of Chris's ministry. He not only checked up on me, keeping close tabs, but visited me several times during my stay in the hospital. During this time, he provided excellent ministry keeping appropriate boundaries. Certainly, this was part of his role while at Bethany Children's Home, ministering to residents and staff. However, he went above and beyond, especially considering he had just left Bethany. His presence, his ministry, and his humor were greatly appreciated.

Additional Comments

Chris is able to create a safe environment and empowers others to reach a higher level of being. In my opinion, this quality of being with people, empowering individuals, groups and organizations is an incredibly important factor in ministry overall and especially in interim ministry.

John Reis 12/1/2014

Bernville PA

Rev Dr. Laurene Bowers
Harrisburg PA
Removed from Profile in 2019

This minister's areas of strength in the practice of ministry as I experience them are:

Chris impresses me as a pastor who is a 'forward thinker.' He has been leading a congregation willing to embrace new ways of being church and adapting to the changing realities in the community. The members of this congregation think very highly of him and I think this is because he knows that 'trust' does not just come with the position of 'pastor' but has to be nurtured and 'earned' through establishing credibility. His pastoral style is one of 'gentle persuasion' and I have witnessed to how members respond by following his lead. I highly recommend him to the parish ministry.

Some areas for improvement in this minister's practice of ministry in my experience of them are:

Chris is still relatively new to the parish ministry but, as mentioned above, he is demonstrating his ability to be a quick learner as he experiences new situations which arise. I cannot think of any specific areas he would need to work on just to continue to develop the skills that he is working on at this time.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this person in ministry:

I have met with Chris and his leaders several times to have a conversation about 'governance' and a new structure as they shift from the old model of 'committees' to 'teams' and how teams function very differently. Chris has facilitated these kinds of conversations about how the 'new church' will function with a new membership model. Gone are the days when people want to serve on committees for the next three years and don't do anything meaningful. Chris knows that the way to help a congregation to develop spiritually is to find new ways of encouraging people to participate. I have seen him inspire this congregation on several occasions.

Additional Comments:

I would think that any church which calls Chris to be their pastor would be quite blessed.

Rev Dr. Laurene Bowers
November 7th 2014

The Following are from my 1st profile, at that time the reference sections was anonymous

Person A Colleague 2004 (Years know 4)

Chris Hart has the potential to be a fine minister of the gospel. He has a strong sense of call, a deep Christian faith, a love of the church, a commitment to social justice, a congenial personality, and genuine care for people in need. He is also highly skilled in new forms of communication, which can be of real help to a congregation.

Chris struggled at times in the classroom, in part because he was also dealing with the demands of a young family. But, as his professor in three course, I can attest that he is bright and has a good understanding of the Christian tradition. (He did high- quality academic work in his final semester in a course with me on the the theology of the ecumenical movement--a key part of UCC identity.) I was particularly pleased with his performance on our travel seminar to Israel/West Bank. During that trip, Chris grew tremendously in his knowledge of the global church and in his understanding of the complexities of peace and justice. This experience will be an asset to any congregation he serves.

I believe that smaller congregations looking for solid, faithful ministry should take a close look at Chris. He has gifts for ministry that can serve the church well for years to come.

Person B Colleague 2004 (Years known 1)

Chris is an intuitive and sensitive person. He has a sense of presence about him that invites people to confide their deepest wounds and struggles. He comes equipped with many skills for providing a ministry of presence and successfully uses his life experiences to develop strong pastoral competencies. He is an excellent addition to a team, yet also has the ability to make decisions autonomously when necessary.

Chris has a dynamic faith. Because he understands that God is intimately involved with the world, Chris demonstrates his own incarnational ministry by engaging in healing relationships.

Person C Colleague (Years known 2)

Chris has excellent people skills. He cares about people and senses how to encourage their development. In a position of leadership, he is a careful listener and encourages healthy group dynamics. He senses when to interject his own opinion and inspires confidence as a leader. In our congregation, he was given many responsibilities with youth and he displayed excellent rapport with them. He has an easy-going nature, is fun-loving and is able to communicate with them about spiritual issues in a way which is honest. Whatever he planned he could be counted upon to carry out. He also has excellent computer skills.

2/20/2013

Person D, Colleague since 2004

I am pleased to give a reference for Christopher A. Hart. I have known him about four years. We first met when I supervised him during contextual education at Evangelical Children's Home. He had no problem accepting supervision from a female - this is not always the case with contextual education students. He was very intentional with our population. The residents and staff said many positive things about "Pastor Hart." I also witnessed him displaying a high level of faith, integrity, responsibility, and motivation to serve God. He is definitely a faith-filled leader who knows how to talk about God with young people from a diverse group of youth. He did this with a kind of respect and love that most adults cannot appreciate. In addition, the residential children and youth and adults alike appreciated his preaching style. He has a great sense of humor that is counterbalanced by his gentle nature. Chris is comfortable in his own skin as a dependable team player. He always does what he says he will do. His trustworthy judgment and mature point of view ensure a sensible and practical approach to his ministerial endeavors.

Chris will be an asset for the church he serves because he loves Christ's Church and the people he serves. My prayer is that the church recognizes Chris as a blessing. In closing, I could check off many more pastoral assets and that is why I feel confident in giving Christopher A. Hart my sincere character reference.

Person E, Youth Lay Church Member

I have had the opportunity to experience Chris' light. I have been on two mission trips with him, and in both circumstances, Chris has brilliantly led myself and the other youth in our personal searches for faith and understanding. He constantly pushes me to think deeper and understand my beliefs. I believe he is able to do this because he has such a deep understanding of his own beliefs. His spiritual guidance allows him to be calm and understanding. Every conversation I have had with Chris has been eye-opening and educational. He is a great leader.

Chris and I share a name. I first met him when he took the role of leading man in the Christ Lutheran Youth Group, of which I was one of the older members. Having gone through 3 different leaders beforehand, I didn't initially know what to think of Chris. Almost immediately (the 2nd week) he started to renovate the group with some creative classes and funny Moments.

It was quite obvious he has a strong faith in God. He would effectively remind us by lighting a candle at the beginning of each session, and blow it out at the end. I found that Chris is full of integrity and honesty through his dealings and planning which were always fair, concise and effective. He's really open to new things and not diluted by any prejudice; one time at a lock-in we were playing hide-and-seek through the rest of the church. I was creeping down the stairs and peeked out into the lobby. The youth had set up some video games, and he walked over to try playing it. Almost right away he lost, and went "Aww, I died." He set the controller down and with no dip in positive attitude kept talking with the other semi-leader of the youth group. I still tell people that story because it was one of the most memorable moments I've ever witness. Wherever Chris goes, he'll connect with people. Wherever he stays, he'll move people.

Person G Colleague Since 2009

I have known Christopher Hart for approximately 1 1/2 years, ever since he was hired as the Associate Pastor at Bethany Children's Home. I am pleased and honored to write this reference. I was immediately drawn to and impressed with Chris. He has been a breath of fresh air to Bethany Children's Home and has allowed his light to shine here. Chris has been able to gain the respect of the Senior Pastor, who is now deceased, his coworkers and his peers.

In my position as Director of Bethany Counseling Ministry, I have been able to invite Chris to many Ministerium meetings that I attend, meetings that are not in his Association. I have been able to see how he interacts with his peers in the ministry. He is well received and is highly respected. He has been able to use technology to coordinate and plan activities, as well as build community through improved communication and outreach.

While working with young people, he evidences his non-judgmentalness, his acceptance of diversity, and is able to share his many gifts and talents with these young men and women. He sees them in an informal basis while leading worship, and in a more direct pastoral counseling situation. His approach appears to be innovative and young people appear to respond to it. While at Bethany, Chris has thrown himself into the mix, has never said no to a challenge, and has offered his input and knowledge: all given freely and at a self-directed level without threat to others. I highly recommend Christopher Hart. He is an asset to Bethany and will be an asset wherever he ministers.

Person H Youth Lay Person

I have had the pleasure to go on two mission trips with Chris. On these mission trips Chris not only educated me on Christianity but he also allowed me to explore my own spirituality. His ability to truly connect with youth would make him an excellent leader in a church environment. For me, he served as a role model because of his willingness to question everything and let me explore my faith and what I thought about the world without pressuring me in any direction.