



The Rev. Dr. Deborah Appler
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Dear Friends,

I write this letter in support of Nicole Vogel who I have had the privilege of working with her during her time as my student at Moravian Theological Seminary. Nicole has taken several classes from me (Introduction to Hebrew Bible; Women in Ministry; Theodicy; The Book of Judges in Teen Ministry; Hebrew I and II; Ezekiel through Malachi) and, I believe, an equal number of New Testament and Greek courses. She is on track to be one of the few to earn the Certificate in Bible along with her M.Div. I have also had many opportunities to participate in worship in which she was the preacher or the liturgist, and have had many conversations with her over the years and am grateful for the many ways that she has invited me into her journey.

Nicole is an outstanding scholar. She has a passion for learning that raises the bar in the classroom and throughout the seminary. The papers she writes are well researched and, more importantly, relevant to the life and concerns of the church. One recent example from the Judges class is her paper entitled "Using Samson with Teens: An Exegetical Look at Judges 13-16." This paper explores the violence in the Samson narrative that parallels the violence and mental health challenges many of our teens face today. Nicole has a gift for applying what she learns to her congregational needs. Her companion project to her Judges paper is a study to be used with teens that she titles "What We Can Learn About Mass Shootings and Suicide." In this study she interweaves the biblical story with the videos, shows (like "Thirteen Reasons Why"), and music to provide a platform for teens to have honest discussions about mass shootings and suicide within the safety of the congregation. I learn so much from her as she brings her research to my attention and to her colleagues. Not only a critical thinker, Nicole is an outstanding Hebrew student. Balancing family, internship, multiple classes, and a language is difficult, but she was up for the task. She is well organized, yet flexible, and committed to her work. It is clear by the depth of her comments in discussion, she reads and engages with the material assigned as well as goes beyond the requirements by bringing in helpful material (academic, prayer, modern connections, etc.).

One of Nicole's gifts that will serve her well in her ministry is her ability to hear and appreciate different points of view. She has a heart for intracultural engagement and is able to dialogue

with people from many theological and cultural locations. She takes time to build relationship and to listen. The church she serves is near a Sikh community and, in a desire to build relationships, chose to spend her intercultural immersion with them. She shares that she has learned so much and really loves this community. Nicole's concern for justice, peace, and respect shines in her preaching, course work, interactions with the seminary and other communities. She is truly compassionate and caring She is also collaborative, which she demonstrates in the group work she engages in at the seminary.

I could go on and on. Let me say that Nicole is outstanding. She will continue to serve the church and the larger community well. I believe that many of the materials she has created in seminary can be published for the greater church. I have been so blessed by having Nicole in my classes and as a person who continues to widen my readings as I too walk my spiritual journey. Let me know if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deborah Appler".

Deborah Appler

Professor of Hebrew Bible

Director of the MATS Program