

On behalf of your Pastor Nominating Committee, I send you greetings. I represent the following members of the committee who have journeyed together for the past 18 months:

Wendi Cimino  
Ralph Davison  
Sheri Evans (Vice Chair)  
Stu Johnston  
Will Martin

Rosa McNairy  
Anne Shoemaker  
Andrew Spainhour  
Becky Veraar  
Libby Wakefield

It has been nearly two years since Sid Batts officially retired and we began our transition process. I would like to acknowledge the work of the Transition Team, the Mission Study Group, and the Nominating Committee for the Pastor Nominating Committee for their work in helping us reach this final stage of our pastoral transition. We have also had valuable assistance from our Presbytery's Committee on Ministry and specifically Larry Hooker from Westminster Presbyterian Church, who has been a valued consultant to our process. Finally I want to thank the congregation for their patience, and the pastoral staff, Neil, Dolly and Danny for their tireless leadership.

We began our search by seeking referrals and recommendations of pastoral candidates from church members, Presbyterian Seminaries and friends of FPC Greensboro. Ultimately we encountered and reviewed nearly 150 candidates from California to New York to Midwest locations in between. We conducted 13 first round interviews and 7 second round interviews via ZOOM. By early March of 2020, we scheduled visits to the churches of 5 of our candidates. We made one visit the second weekend in March before the COVID-19 Pandemic arrived.

As we all adjusted to the new realities of the pandemic, including the use of virtual worship as a substitute for live worship, the PNC patiently persisted. Instead of visiting the churches of our candidates, we decided to bring 5 candidates to Greensboro for in person meetings and conversations. It was very strange to offer tours of the church campus while it has been essentially empty. 3 finalists were invited for a return visit to Greensboro in August.

When we began our search, we were told about the role of discernment in our process. Discernment may not come naturally to most of us. We were encouraged to invite the Holy Spirit to guide us through our journey. The final selection was challenging, but through our discernment, the Holy Spirit spoke loudly and clearly to us about whom we should call to become the twelfth Senior Pastor in our church's 196-year history. If I had to summarize the experience of the PNC, I would say that the Presbyterian Church USA has outstanding pastoral leadership, and that the future is very bright!! We loved each of our candidates, especially those whom we met with in person here in Greensboro. Ultimately we could only select one, and the PNC is very excited about our selection.

The PNC has presented a call to Reverend Dr. Jill Duffield to become our next Senior Pastor. Jill is likely familiar to many in our congregation who subscribe to the

Presbyterian Outlook, where she has served as the first female editor and publisher for the past five and a half years. Let me tell you a little more about her background.

Jill was born in Canada and spent her early years in Halifax Nova Scotia. Her family moved to Mount Gilead, NC when she was starting fourth grade. She attended high school in Pinehurst, where she met her future husband (Grant) and graduated early at the age of 16. She and Grant would attend and graduate from UNC-G. Jill graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in history at the tender age of 19. She stayed in Greensboro following her graduation. While deciding what she wanted to do in her career, she had an epiphany. She attended a Christmas Eve service at Starmount Presbyterian Church and afterward sensed a call to apply to seminary. Her pastor at her home church at Mount Gilead literally drove her to Union Seminary in Richmond, where she earned her Masters of Divinity. She later earned a doctorate in ministry at Austin Seminary in Texas.

Grant and Jill will celebrate their thirtieth anniversary next year. They moved around a lot early in her ministry. Each took turns at accepting opportunities to help further the other's career. Jill served five congregations in North and South Carolina during her 20 years of ministry prior to joining the Presbyterian Outlook. Her last call was as associate pastor with Shandon Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC. When the head pastor accepted a call to another congregation she was appointed to serve as the Acting Head of Staff. Grant is a Public Sector Management Professional and most recently has been employed as a Senior Project Manager with the City of Newport News, VA.

While serving as the editor and publisher of the Presbyterian Outlook, she made changes that not only dramatically improved the quality of the publication, but also brought it back to financial viability in an era of electronic communication. She and Grant currently live in Charlottesville, VA, where she also served as a Visiting Scholar and guest preacher at Olivet Presbyterian Church. She is also in demand nationally at Presbyterian churches and conferences as a guest preacher and speaker. Jill and Grant have three children: Joseph, who is a graduate of UNC-G and currently lives in New Orleans; Jesse, who is a sophomore at Martha Washington University in Fredericksburg VA; and Marissa, who is a freshman at Elon University. Jill's parents and her sister are all Piedmont Triad residents. This is truly a homecoming for her!

Why did the PNC select Jill Duffield to become our next pastor? She was "hands down" our best candidate. She is highly intelligent, and she is very humble. She is an excellent preacher, and is in demand nationally as a speaker. She is a leader with a "non-anxious presence". We were impressed with her communications skills. She always had concise responses to our questions. I could go on, but let me leave you with this thought. It would be difficult for her to meet everyone in a church this size in normal times. During a pandemic, it will be even more challenging. But I am confident that once you meet her, work with her, and hear her preach, you will know that the PNC has done its work exceedingly well, and we are very fortunate to attract such a highly

qualified candidate to lead our church!! Best news of all, she will begin December 1<sup>st</sup> and will lead worship on Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup>.