

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Birmingham, Alabama
Sr. Pastor Search

History. Third Presbyterian Church is a body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ that has been worshipping in the downtown area of Birmingham, Alabama, for 134 years. The founding pastor was a young, freshly minted Princeton Theological Seminary graduate named James Bryan, eventually known throughout the city as “Brother Bryan”. Brother Bryan was a passionate evangelist and pastor to many in early 20th century Birmingham who were “unchurched”, a labor of love that led to his being memorialized by a statute now located in the popular area of the city known as Five Points South. Following Brother Bryan at Third Presbyterian Church have been only two additional pastors. We currently seek the Lord’s guidance in searching for the fourth.

Characteristics and Location. For all 134 years, Third Presbyterian Church has been characterized by a passionate love of the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. We are a church that is loving, caring, helpful, and welcoming. We are also now located in an area with the potential for significant outreach and ministry. The church building is located in the Southside area of Birmingham, one block from the University of Alabama – Birmingham (UAB) hospital, a teaching hospital for the UAB Medical School and a part of the broader UAB campus. The area is exploding in population, with 500 new urban multi-family dwellings soon to be constructed within two blocks of the church building in three directions.

Style. The church’s sanctuary is beautiful, with three large, stained glass picture windows, and was recently renovated. It is located on a well-traversed three lane, one-way street. The worship style is consistent with the building – traditional Presbyterian order and content, with a robed choir, organ, piano, and primarily traditional hymnody. The Pulpit Committee believes that though Third Presbyterian values a traditional order and form of worship, there is a willingness to change aspects of the music, within bounds, to create relevance to younger families and to others within the community in which we are located.

Demographic. Currently, church members are from many areas of Birmingham, primarily from the suburbs in the “over the mountain” area. The congregation includes many members in the 55 to 85 age range, as well as several young families and a bumper crop of nursery aged children, but has no junior high or high school aged children. This is an area that the Pulpit Committee believes needs attention.

Status. The church has benefitted from steady additions to membership over the past several years, with members coming from diverse geographic locations throughout our city. The members of Third are very committed to the church. The buildings are structurally sound and well maintained by a very active Diaconate. The finances of the church are very sound.

Ministries. In addition to Sunday School, Bible studies, and nursery ministries, church members are involved in a biblically-based jobs teaching and mentoring program which is held in our church facility, a residential treatment facility in downtown Birmingham for alcohol or drug addicted men, and, sporadically, a local UAB campus ministry. The church has a healthy missions’ budget for supporting local and foreign missionaries and enjoys an annual missions conference.

Opportunities. The Pulpit Committee is comprised of representative members of the Session, Diaconate, and congregation. The committee believes that the church is perfectly situated for growth that could occur through consistently reaching out with Gospel-centered evangelism, help and welcome to UAB students, UAB medical school or hospital students, physicians or patients, or new residents moving into the neighborhood. The committee also believes it is important for the church to do so, and that the congregation is willing provided that there is effective leadership from the successful pastoral candidate. With encouraging leadership and an effective strategy, the committee believes that Third Presbyterian Church has the promise of becoming a Gospel – centered oasis of life in the middle of the cultural and medical center of our city.

Pastor Candidate Profile. The next pastor of Third Presbyterian should, first and foremost, have an exceptional ability to preach and teach the Word of God. This is in the DNA of our church. He should hold firmly and be able to articulate with clarity and conviction the Reformed faith and its biblical foundation. He should subscribe in good faith to the Westminster Confession of Faith as the most accurate summary of the true Christian faith as taught by the Word of God. He must be a man of integrity with a passion for seeing others grow in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important, though not critical, that he be married and that his wife be active in the church. It is critical that he be a good shepherd of God's flock at Third, and that he be able, as demonstrated by 7 to 10 years of previous pastoral ministry, to lead the congregation in reaching and developing ministry in our neighborhood.