



Faith Presbyterian Church

Clinton, Louisiana

Pastor Candidate Packet

A Letter from our Former Pastor

Hello,

My name is TE Kelly W. Dotson and I am the former pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church, Clinton, Louisiana. I am writing to tell you a little about this church family and the community of Clinton. I was the fourth pastor called to pastor Faith church. I began serving Faith as an Assistant Pastor over youth and families in 2009 and transitioned to the solo Pastor of Faith in 2013. Over the past 13 years I saw this church through many ups and downs and I can honestly say that this church is full of the loveliest believers who love Christ and his Church. In this letter I will hopefully show you why I believe that.

I was raised in a Christian home at Plains Presbyterian Church in Zachary, LA (just 25 minutes south of Clinton). I first sensed the call to the ministry when I was 15 years old. Over the years I made it a point to visit as many PCA churches in our area as I could. My first time visiting Faith was in 1998 when they invited the local RUF (or the Bible study that would become RUF) to share about the work the Lord was doing on LSU's campus. Even back then as a young man I could tell that Faith was a church that wanted to help with the mission of discipling the nations. The people of Faith welcomed all the college students that attended that Sunday and made us feel at home. Years later as I attended presbytery meetings I met the elders that they sent to Presbytery. Even though I didn't know them well I knew that this was a church that valued their involvement in the presbytery and took seriously their role as stewards of the mysteries of God.

While I was in seminary my wife (Amy) and I would drive through Clinton in order to go back home to Zachary. Amy would always comment how lovely a town Clinton was, how one day she could see us living there. (And, during one election cycle, she commented that she could run for Mayor—she never did, thank the Lord). In short order I received a call from the pastor of Faith asking if I wanted to come home and be their youth minister. We gladly accepted and moved to Clinton on a wing and a prayer, living on love and not much else, eager to find out what the Lord had in store for us. That first Sunday we met many of our best friends and co-laborers in Christ. These were a people who desired to see the gospel ministry thrive in Clinton and were willing to serve Christ. They willingly sacrificed their time, talents and resources for the Lord.

From the earliest days we were at Faith there was a strong sense of unity among the session and diaconate. They longed to dwell in harmony with one another because of their unity in the gospel. And I saw the elders make hard decision, sometimes unpopular decisions, because it was the right thing to do. They have done it for the sake of gospel unity believing the promises of God to dwell with his people. The unity on the session spread to the people, the member and regular visitors of Faith. For the duration of my time at Faith there was a sweetness of unity that infected every area of church life. Even when disagreements naturally arose or when confrontation was necessary a desire for Christian unity and love permeated the church. I often reflected with Amy that the people of Faith were among the dearest Christians I have known.

Let me also share with you the great love and care that this congregation has for their pastor and his family. We had some difficult times as a family during our 13 years at Faith. Amy and I desired a family,

but the Lord has seen fit to not allow us to have our own biological children. That led us to explore other means to have children, through IVF procedures and adoption. Both of those avenues are expensive and emotionally taxing. This church was with us through many difficult times in our attempts to grow our family. And when the Lord saw fit to grant us a family through adoption the people at Faith were with us in celebrating. They cried with us and they laughed with us. They supported us financially and spiritually. They take seriously their responsibility before the Lord to care for their shepherds.

Now, you might ask, “if things were so great at Faith, why leave?” That is a question that I have been asked many times since we made the decision to take our new call. Here is the answer that I have given: first, I didn’t want to leave Faith. I was not looking for a new call when SBRPC called me. We had seen an incredible amount of growth from the fall of 2021 to the Spring of 2022 and things were going really well at Faith. We were excited about the direction the Lord was taking the church. But SBRPC is a church that I had previously worked with and still had many connections to. They offered me an opportunity to do some ministry that I had not previously been able to do at Faith. It was that new opportunity that appealed to me, not a desire to leave Faith. We agonized over the decision to leave the people of Faith and the work that God had called us to there.

It is my prayer that the Lord will bring a godly man to Faith to lead and shepherd them so that they forget all about me as their pastor. I will always have deep friendships with the people of Faith and they will remain dear to my heart for the rest of my life. I would delight to talk more about the people and ministry at Faith in order to help them in their search for their next pastor. Please feel free to call, text or email me any question you might have. I am praying the Lord’s blessing on you and your family as you discern his call for you.

In Christ,

Kelly W. Dotson

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Faith Presbyterian Church Profile

Church Mission/Vision:

The mission of Faith Presbyterian Church is to seek to reach all people with the gospel message of Jesus Christ and to declare his lordship over all the earth. We strive to meet this mission through the right teaching and preaching of God's word, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and support of missions/missionaries.

Church History:

The history of Faith Presbyterian Church is a true demonstration of walking by faith, not by sight! In 1978, Clyde Kennedy, elder, and his wife Sybil moved to Clinton from Baton Rouge. They were not satisfied with the local churches so while they continued to attend church in Baton Rouge, they began a Bible study in Clinton with the hopes of eventually starting a church that "taught and preached the whole council of the word of God." The first two Bible studies that were started were discontinued, but then a client of Clyde's expressed interest in a Bible study with the same goal of wanting to start a church. The attendance at this study grew and in 1986 a small church was built with voluntary labor, donated materials and cash offerings.

Faith Presbyterian Church was originally pastored by the minister from the church in Baton Rouge that Clyde and Sybil attended. When he retired in 1989, a pastoral intern from Plains Presbyterian Church in nearby Zachary conducted the church services. At this time, Plains Church agreed to help Faith Presbyterian as a daughter church. In 1991, Shane Sunn was called to be the organizing pastor and 5 elders were installed. The previously built church building was outgrown and the present church building was built and dedicated in 1995. The mortgage was paid off February 2003.

Faith Presbyterian Church is part of the Presbyterian Church of America denomination and is a member of the Southern Louisiana Presbytery.

Church population:

Our congregation is predominately middle age and older but there are also children of all ages. There are approximately 50 communing members and 10 non-communing members. The members are mostly conservative and strongly value family and community.

Church building:

Faith Presbyterian Church was built in 1995. The church building is comprised of the sanctuary, an office for the pastor, an office for the church secretary and 3 other offices, one currently used as a library, one used as a class room and one used as a workroom/storage area for Sunday school and VBS materials. There are 4 other classrooms and a nursery. There is a kitchen with a connecting fellowship hall.

Church staff:

3 Ruling Elders

5 Deacons

Part time secretary

Part time nursery worker

Pianist

Church activities:

Activities of FPC include a Monday night Bible study, Vacation Bible School, and youth group (which is led by the pastor). Fellowship meals are held for special occasions, holidays and just because! Pre-covid, an annual Christmas program was performed but there is no formal music program.

Ministry opportunities:

Ministry opportunities in Clinton are challenging for several reasons, one being the small size of Clinton and the surrounding rural area. Secondly, there is a strong Baptist and Catholic influence and lastly there are 5 other reformed churches (mostly Baptist) within 15 miles. On the other hand, the members of Faith Presbyterian Church are a close knit group and committed to the maintenance and growth of the church.

Faith Presbyterian Church is a church that has always supported missionaries and church plants. The church has consistently given 15-20% of its budget to support missions and the goal is to continue this practice in the future.

Clinton, Louisiana Profile

Population and location:

Clinton is a small rural community of approximately 1500 people. It is 30 miles north of Baton Rouge, LA which is home to Louisiana State University, Southern University and Baton Rouge Community College.

Education:

Currently Clinton has one public school and one private school. There also is a strong home school population in Clinton and surrounding areas.

Cultural and recreation activities:

Clinton is a sports driven town whether it's local high school sports or LSU sports. Hunting and fishing are also extremely popular in the area with deer season being declared another season of the year! There are lakes for fishing and water sports within 30 miles of Clinton.

Clinton has many historical buildings including the courthouse which was built in 1840 and is still in use today. Silliman Institute was started in 1852 as a

women's college and was operated by the Presbytery of Louisiana until 1931. It is currently used, under the same name, as a private school.

There are several museums and art galleries in Baton Rouge. Concerts, ballet, and theatrical performances are also frequently held in Baton Rouge.

Desired Profile of Next Pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church

The pastor of FPC will have the following attributes:

- Is firmly grounded in God's word and is gifted in teaching and preaching the scriptures with knowledge and conviction
- Lives out reformed theology
- Is a good listener and counselor and walks with the congregation in their joys and sorrows
- Participates in church activities as well as delegating tasks
- Will be involved in the community
- Will be comfortable in a small town setting
- Is energetic and outgoing and is up for the challenge of pastoring a church in a community that is largely Catholic and Baptist.
- Promotes fellowship within the church through different church activities.
- Is able to reach and relate to different age groups including our youth
- Continues our long standing practice of supporting missions and church plants.

Contact information:

Interested applicants may send a resume to:

Nathan Strebeck, pulpit committee chair **nstrebeck@me.com**