

Pastor: Gainesville Presbyterian Church

(Presbyterian Church in America)

Introduction:

Gainesville Presbyterian Church (GPC) is seeking an experienced Christian man to serve as our next solo pastor. Our current pastor, the second to lead the congregation in the church's 43-year history, is retiring in September, 2024, after 40 years of service with this congregation.

Church Description:

GPC is located in Gainesville in the western part of Prince William County, VA, and is part of the PCA's Potomac Presbytery. As one of the westernmost commuting suburbs in Northern Virginia, the town of Gainesville is located in the transition zone between the metropolitan Washington, DC area and more rural portions of the state. Sitting adjacent to Manassas Battlefield National Park and Conway Robinson State Forest, the area is rich in history and offers access to both urban and rural communities and their varied amenities. There are many locally run businesses that employ local residents, though many area residents commute into Washington, DC and the surrounding metropolitan area. The latter are mostly federal government employees or support contractors with large corporations working in the more congested areas of Virginia, Maryland, or the District of Columbia.

Our congregation currently has just under 100 communicant members and there are typically about 60 people present for Sunday worship. GPC is a welcoming and joyful congregation of members who care for each other and are committed to loving, encouraging, and supporting our pastor. We are confident our new pastor and his family will develop many new friendships among us.

The church has a relatively traditional Presbyterian / Reformed worship style; Sunday mornings typically consist of Sunday School for ages from pre-school to adult, followed by a worship service. We have a bi-weekly women's Bible study, monthly men's fellowship, a weekly men's Bible study, youth and young adult gatherings, and a monthly fellowship luncheon.

The session has one teaching elder and two ruling elders. There are five men in the Diaconate. Financially, the church owns its facility outright, carries no long-term debt, and congregational giving typically meets or exceeds its fiscal needs. This has enabled a substantial investment in missionary support over a sustained period, which is an enduring passion of the congregation.

Position Overview:

The church's vision for the role of pastor is based on the characteristics found in I Timothy 3 and closely follows the description given in the PCA Book of Church Order. The pastor will serve as moderator of the session and will: lead the majority of church worship services including preaching, be engaged in leading and equipping others to teach both on Sunday and also in mid-week Bible studies. We have a strong desire to grow in the area of Evangelism and see the establishment of evangelistic ministries, and we are looking for a pastor who can help lead us in this area.

To better understand the congregation's expectations and desires for the pastor, our Pastor Search Committee surveyed the congregation to understand our priorities for the job *functions* of the pastor. In order of importance, the feedback from the congregation consisted of the top seven out of eighteen priorities:

1. Proclamation of the Word and Teaching
2. Spiritual Development and Shepherding
3. Visitation
4. Congregational Fellowship
5. Leadership and Worship
6. Evangelism
7. Congregational Communications

In the same survey, the congregation expressed its desires for the most important *attributes* of our next pastor. Here, the top five of twelve are given in order of importance:

1. Compassionate
2. Outstanding teacher
3. Relates to a wide variety of people
4. Good listener
5. Handles conflict effectively

Specific Position Requirements:

The successful candidate will bring his experience and training in the following areas to meet the general objectives outlined above. The following specific qualifications are grouped by general topics. The basic professional accomplishments must include:

1. At least four years' experience as a pastor (solo, associate, or senior) of a congregation or other ministerial experience involving preaching and teaching such as missionary work.
2. A master's degree in a relevant discipline from a reformed or multi-denominational seminary; a Master of Divinity or its equivalent is how our Presbytery defines the requirements of the Book of Church Order, 21-4.
3. Ordained or easily able to be ordained within the PCA.

As noted above, preaching skills are considered foundational. Specific objectives include:

1. Consistent preparation and delivery of compelling messages based directly on the Biblical text.
2. Preaching that consistently calls for deeper personal faith in Christ, spiritual growth, and evangelism.
3. Preaching that is easily understandable and shows how the Word can be applied and lived out in everyday life.
4. Preaching that can engage directly with the perspectives of our diverse community in Gainesville and the surrounding area as a means for evangelism. We expect corporate worship on the Lord's Day to be focused on the worship of our Sovereign Lord by God's people but be generally understandable by anyone visiting with us during that time.

GPC values strong Biblical teaching. Key characteristics of the pastor should include:

1. Strong ability to teach (as distinct from "preach") the Word.
2. Able to help and direct others in their ongoing Christian education and ability to teach.
3. Able to teach in an engaging way with appropriate application and relates well to those under instruction.

A pastor is, by definition, a shepherd of the local flock. We seek a servant leader who embodies the following:

1. Commitment to broadly nurturing a culture that embodies Christ's example of servant leadership and obedient life.
2. Demonstrated ability to instruct and direct others in performing visitation and pastoral care.
3. Effective spiritual counseling skills suitable for both families and individuals intended to help them grow in their relationship with the Lord.

We seek a man who can leverage and energize the gifts and abilities within the congregation. Aspects of leadership will include:

1. Demonstrated ability to guide and develop church staff, lay leadership and congregants in utilizing their God-given abilities.
2. Demonstrated skills in leading church staff and volunteers to accomplish church goals for spiritual growth in the congregation and equipping for ministry, outreach and evangelism.
3. Able to collaboratively define and refine a vision for church growth with other members of the session.

GPC is an engaged community, and a successful pastor will build and expand on that aspect of our congregation. Thus, the following objectives are considered important:

1. A collaborative leadership style that works well in team settings and, particularly, with elected church leaders.
2. Engagement with our Presbytery and the General Assembly is expected, and established relationships within the Presbytery would be a significant plus.
3. Demonstrated ability to develop community across generations within the church.
4. Able to oversee a strengthening and expansion of ministry to children and youth.

Other Congregation Perspectives:

In this section, we hope to give some additional perspective on a few other topics that are particularly important to at least some portions of the congregation.

As with any church, the composition of the congregation has changed over time and today there are a number of families with young children through early teens. Consequently, there is a desire for a stronger children's / youth ministry, and a desire for it to grow. We do not expect our future pastor to be solely responsible for establishing and growing such a ministry, only that he be prepared to oversee an organized response to this real and growing desire.

Similarly, GPC has a desire to continue fostering inter-generational relationships within our church body. We want to see discipleship flourish, and we see our pastor as a chief individual to lead or support that effort.

We recognize that evangelism is a vital aspect of the Church's mission. We seek someone to lead as a role model in this area, and who can provide encouragement to have effective personal evangelism, as well as either lead or support larger, more coordinated efforts. We do not want someone who expects to use the Lord's Day, corporate worship and sermon as the chief evangelism tool.

We also desire a pastor with administrative ability who can communicate openly and transparently with staff and church members. We want to provide strong direction from leadership but emphasize the importance of enabling the congregation to take a significant role in church efforts.

Compensation and Application Instructions:

Although we have listed many characteristics and ministry areas, we do not expect a pastor to do it all. We have many volunteers, as well as ruling elders and deacons who can share the load. We need someone to provide encouragement and direction to these ministries. We also expect our pastor to have a balanced “life/work” priority. We would expect to see approximately 40 to 55 hours a week given to ministry in its various forms, to include work with the Presbytery and General Assembly. We realize that some weeks will be very demanding, while other weeks will be relaxed and undemanding.

Finally, we have two compensation packages available. The candidate may select 1 of 2 compensation packages as described below. Starting compensation will be based on experience, education, and with consideration for family needs. We desire to re-evaluate and possibly increase compensation as the church grows and our finances are able.

Package 1: \$90K - \$125K to be distributed as negotiated between salary, housing allowance, retirement plan, and medical plus a \$6,500 expense account for ministry related expenses.

Package 2: \$70K - \$105K to be distributed as negotiated between salary, retirement plan, medical, and GPC-provided housing in our manse situated on a 1.8 acre property adjacent to the GPC building, plus a \$6,500 expense account for ministry related expenses.

If interested in pursuing this job opening, or desire to find out more about this opportunity, please contact the Pastor Search Committee chairman, Larry Poe, at ls_poe@comcast.net, or call him at 540-788-9503 anytime. Feel free to leave a message.

We would like to receive a resume, a listing of three references, three sermon examples (via CD/DVD, audio online via church / other website, or video online via Youtube / other), and answers to the following three questions:

1. Please describe your journey of faith in coming to profess Christ as your Savior and Lord. How have you seen your faith deepen over the years?
2. Please describe how you knew you were being called into Christian ministry. How was this confirmed by others?
3. Please explain any exceptions you hold to the Westminster Standards, and what difficulties you may have with the current BCO. Please provide your rationale as part of the explanation.

We would expect no more than a single page response to each of these three questions.

We will have additional questions once our committee is satisfied with your initial responses and resume, and we look forward to continuing to work with you regarding this position.