



Northampton Presbyterian Church

Introducing Our Candidate for Senior Pastor

Rev. Judith Ann Dwyer



I believe God is calling me to solo ministry in an inclusive setting. I have had extensive experience in both church and institutional systems and recognize the challenge of making the church “run” in functional, healthy ways. I am an organizer, a task manager and one who is energized by the dynamics of the church family, particularly the staff, as a system. Of primary importance to me is leading those who serve God’s church toward the vision of who they are called to be in their time and place. I am open to persons of diverse faith backgrounds and none at all and believe there is not only one way to God, but that we have been gifted with a variety of beliefs and faiths that lead us to One God. I have a deep appreciation for the demands that come with ministry as well as the need for healthy boundaries and a pathway to accountability. I love to teach and one of the highlights of my current ministry has involved leading the Adult Education and Confirmation Classes in affirming our call to public witness. I am privileged to write all services of worship and to preach every Sunday. Preaching allows me to reflect, along with the congregation, on our call to be prophets, healers and visionaries in a world desperately in need of a church unafraid to speak boldly.



Dear Members and Staff of Northampton Presbyterian Church:

Just a dozen years ago, I sat with my husband John in the study of the pastor who served as my Head of Staff and mentor unmatched. We worked together for several years, he in a position of ordained leadership and I as a lay person. After trying my best to evade the still, small voice I'd heard calling most of my life, I had a decision to make. Would I give up the comfort of everything I knew – the church, the people, even my own family's comfort—for the life of a seminary student? What if I gave it all up and failed? Changed my mind? Wanted out?

With fear and trembling my constant companions, I signed on the dotted line and took myself off to seminary. There I discovered 40 or so other “non-traditional” students, those seasoned by a career or two in the secular world who were also committing their lives to the service of the church. We supported each other through Greek and Hebrew, through separation from our families and ordination exams. By the mysterious grace of God, we made it through every challenge. And then we found ourselves called to as many different kinds of ministry as you can imagine!

Try as we might, we cannot predict where and how God is going to call and use us. We can only give ourselves over to God's grace and trust that there is a plan we cannot see and a purpose to which we are being led. From my days as in the hospital as a trauma chaplain to serving as a transitional associate and then solo pastor, I have felt led by God's mysterious presence. And I trust God is now calling me to Northampton, to this beautiful and welcoming congregation.

By Zoom and face-to-face, your PNC and I have gathered and discussed, questioned and answered. Together with Dana, Corinne, Helen, Kathy, Jane, Joe and Steve, I have listened and laughed, challenged and been challenged. I even took a little drive over Buck Road and sat in the parking lot one sunny afternoon, to orient myself to your surroundings and to see where God might be directing me. To discern whether this might be a good fit. When I arrived home that evening, I told John I thought this might be the place. That, if I was lucky enough to receive this call, I would surely accept it.

I wonder and marvel at God's sense of call. At what God sees in all of us that we cannot. It is with a sense of awe and awareness of the mystery about to unfold that I happily find myself in your midst. Where, together, we can begin to build a relationship rooted in the love of God, made real to us in the person of God's son, Jesus. The same Jesus whose story unfolds in the stained-glass window that arrests our attention in the sanctuary. That bids us stop and consider the mystery of his life among human beings and where following him takes us.

Through marriage and parenting, chaplaincy and the church, I have followed this Jesus. It is his example I seek to live into in seasons of joy and sorrow, abundance and want, health and pandemic. And I am confident that, with him, we can begin a new chapter in the life of this congregation. One that brings all of our resources to this family's table, where, fed and nourished, we can touch the lives of those in the community that surrounds us.

I can't wait to see where God is leading us! We have only to “...be still, and know.” (Ps 46:10) And then get busy doing! May God bless our journey together!

- Pastor Judy

Current Role:

Transitional Pastor
Calvary Presbyterian
Church
Wyncote, PA
2018 - July 2021

Education:

**Princeton Theological
Seminary**
Masters of Divination

LaSalle University
Master of Arts in
Pastoral Counseling

Millersville University
Bachelors of Science in
Elementary Education

It is with great joy that we, your Pastor Nominating Committee, announce the Reverend Judith Dwyer as our candidate for Pastor and Head of Staff. It has been an honor to be entrusted with this important, sacred work, and we have felt the weight of your collective hopes and prayers. We could not be any more certain that Rev. Dwyer is the person God has selected to lead Northampton Presbyterian Church into its next chapter.



What our Pastor Nominating Committee is saying about Rev. Judith Dwyer

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Rev. Judy's pastoral and Chaplin skills of empathy, compassion and care, combined with her desire to lead a church rooted in the love of God made real to us in the person of God's son, Jesus. It became clear to us during our interviews that God has blessed us.

Joe Rawson

Having interviewed online and met with her over several hours, I am happy to present Rev. Judith Dwyer to our congregation as our candidate to be our new pastor. She is a woman of passionate Christianity quite able to share her love of Christ with others and is well qualified to lead our congregation into the future.

Steve Cocchia

Rev. Dwyer possesses a unique combination of talents that make her a wonderful fit for NPC. She is a strategic thinker that knows how to help a church identify its vision and mission and align its programs to deliver against these goals; and she is an empathic listener that shares God's wisdom and caring to individuals going through trying times and situations. I can't wait to see where we all are in the coming years!

Dana Winslow

Rev. Judy is a great listener, very compassionate, and will be a wonderful addition to our church. Her presence and guidance will help Northampton move forward into our future.

Corinne Kauerman

I am so excited to have Rev. Judith Dwyer as our new pastor. During our interviews, Rev. Dwyer was caring, empathetic, a good communicator, listener and team builder. She has a good background in Christian theology, is filled with the Holy Spirit and will be an asset to the Northampton Presbyterian Church Family.

Helen Mercer

After reading over 100 PIFs, I was happy to find qualities of compassion and empathy in Rev. Dwyer's writings, as well as in discussions we had together during the interview process. Northampton will be blessed to have her as our fifth pastor.

Kathy Hurwitz

Rev. Judith Dwyer's Statement of Faith

I believe that God, the origin and author of life, in the fullness of time sent the Son into the world to be born and live among us. This Jesus is the only Son of the triune God, fully human and fully divine, coeternal and co-equal with God and the Holy Spirit. This Divine community, existing in unity and love, models God's intention for human community.

I understand each member of this Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to be the one, holy God, who is at the same time the Father of Jesus Christ through whom the Holy Spirit proceeds, empowering us to live lives of obedience to and faith in God. God desires that we live in relationship with this holy community. We are to respond to God's gift of life in ways that serve God's purposes of renewal, restoration and wholeness for all of humanity.

Being human, we act in ways that do not reflect God's purposes, living for ourselves and not for God. This results in our need to be restored to right relationship with God through the redeeming actions of Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the cost of our disobedience by taking on our guilt; he suffered the consequences of sin in our place. In Christ's death on the cross we died to sin; in Christ's resurrection, we were promised new life.

As members of the Reformed tradition, we live into this promise by faith alone: we have been saved by the grace of a merciful and loving God. We further believe that Christ came for all, for those who believe as well as for those who are unable to believe. God's grace is freely given, and we cannot earn it any more than we can "undo" it.

The saving love of God in Jesus Christ is attested in Scripture, the divinely-inspired Word of God that guides our relationships with God and one another and reveals to us God's redeeming purposes. We come to an understanding of Scripture through the inward action of the Holy Spirit within the community of faith. There, through the Word preached and the sacraments rightly administered, we are empowered to carry God's message of hope and reconciliation to all.

The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are outward, visible signs of internal, invisible grace. In baptism, the sign of water seals the promise of God's salvation on our hearts, pointing us to Christ who forgives our sins: we die in Christ and rise to a new way of life and are publicly incorporated into the family of God through Christ by the Spirit. In the Lord's Supper, we receive spiritual nourishment through the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the signs of bread and wine. Christ sealed our forgiveness in his death on the cross and promises life eternal. Christ is present in the worshiping community, which is sent into the world as his body.

As fed, nurtured, forgiven and loved covenant people, we are to work for social, economic, racial and relational justice. This reconciling work reflects God's intention for creation and all humanity to exist in wholeness and integrity.