



FAQ – About Pastor Kelly

Your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) put together this list of 10 Frequently Asked Questions.

1. Why does the congregation vote on only one candidate?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order states: “The session shall call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee that shall be representative of the whole congregation. The committee’s duty shall be to nominate a pastor for election by the congregation.”

Likewise, the denomination’s guiding manual for this process, [“On Calling a New Pastor.”](#) explains that the PNC is to present the pastor-elect to the congregation.

In January 2020, our congregation elected us as your 10-member Pastor Nominating Committee, and we immediately began work. The Rev. Dr. Kelly Wadsworth emerged from among our finalists as the pastor to whom God was leading us.

2. You had other finalists. What was the PNC vote? How close was it?

We operated by consensus. The decision to call Pastor Kelly was by unanimous consensus. It was enthusiastic.

3. What about the other candidates? Did you consider anyone from within our Presbytery?

We considered nearly 100 candidates. They came from throughout the U.S. and abroad.

Under denomination rules, we are sworn to ongoing confidentiality regarding any candidates other than our pastor-elect. At the conclusion of our work, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires that “information and references regarding your pastor-elect should be sealed and kept in the church’s personnel files.” We are to destroy all other communications and information about candidates.

4. Why Pastor Kelly?

Many reasons. We encourage you to watch [our congregational video](#) if you have not done so.

More formally, our Jan. 3, 2021, report to Session stated: “Our interactions with this candidate included 12 lengthy conversations via Zoom and more than 100 emails, plus phone conversations. We also watched worship services and interviewed national and local

references. The candidate is fully aware of our current financial situation, in addition to having requested and reviewed Westminster's annual reports for the past three years. We believe this candidate exhibits a thorough understanding of and respect for Presbyterian polity and theology; thoughtful, inspiring sermons; an engaging personality coupled with tremendous intellect; and skill in helping congregations grow intergenerationally and confront financial challenges."

5. Have you met Pastor Kelly in person?

Most PNC members have. Indeed, she is as warm, thoughtful and spiritual in person as she is virtually. Her family is delightful.

6. You mentioned Pastor Kelly's Statement of Faith. Please share it:

GOD

I believe in a moving, dancing God;

I trust in a piercing, intense God;

I experience a quiet, whispering God.

The Ultimate One who pursues me reached beyond the limits of time and space to stitch me into the fabric of the Ruach – the Breath of Life.

This Holy Breath, beginning in Genesis and continuing through the ages, is the creating force and utmost foundation of the universe. It sustains the heavenly order and the earthly realm in intimate dialogue.

JESUS

I believe Jesus Christ was and is the embodiment of the With-Us-God, *Emmanu-El*. This With-Us-God embraced the eternal dance between heaven and earth through the person of Jesus Christ at a particular moment in history.

Jesus was and is a full citizen of the Divine order – the City of God. Jesus was and is a full citizen of the earthly realm – the City of Creation. Jesus' earthly life from birth to ministry to death to resurrection shines the light of heaven into the crevices of the world.

Living boldly with paramount fidelity to God's call, Jesus was the utmost fusion of holy contemplation and worldly action.

But the work was cut short.

It ended too soon.

Untimely death.

Trauma.

The suffering and shock of the cross is the darkest part of the Christian story. It holds the parts of humanity that are fractured, fallen, and evil.

In the void of night when the black shadow of despair had overcome everyone, in fact the whole world –

A flicker, a spark.

The faintest whisper that dawn was coming.

The first ray from the sun...an empty tomb.

The brightening of the horizon...an angel appears.

The breaking of the day...the women proclaim.

The stronghold of death had not been the last word.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

Through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the Hand of God ushers in redemption for the world which is wholeness of spirit, healing of community, and forgiveness of sin.

SPIRIT

I believe in the Moving Presence, which is the Holy Spirit. She is urgent while patient, unrelenting while calming. The Divine Pneuma animates Christ's body in our world and the Church expresses this movement in countless ways.

Our Holy Texts, both written and lived, guide the saints as the refining fire.

The written Word of God in the Scriptures- speaks new life into existence, opens closed ears, unlocks understanding, coalesces wisdom, and brings about the highest forms of faith, hope, and love.

Baptism by water into the Spirit is the first of our two Sacraments. As a sign and seal of Love's promises, we are initiated into Christ's body and receive the time-tested assurances of God. In Baptism, we root into our spiritual home, we live among Christ's family, and we reach out into God's heavenly and earthly realms.

Through the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Church is established in her holy identity and nourished in her life together. As a sign and seal of Love's promises, the Church finds her foundation in this Holy Act.

7. Please give an example of what she wrote in her Personal Information Form.

“Describe a time when you have led change: My current call had undergone the retirement of a long-time minister, the departure of an important after-school program, and the resignation of a beloved music minister when I arrived. Worship was the first area in need of attention as it was straddling between the two worlds of contemporary and traditional. I introduced ‘Third Hymn stories,’ a practice by which members would choose their favorite hymn and share a personal story about its meaning each Sunday. The act of getting to know one another’s spiritual histories through hymns proved to be great fun as well as a needed balance with the contemporary music that we were also singing.

“I led the worship team to recognize the unique needs of grandparents who worshiped with their grandchildren as well as single/visiting parents, both groups which kept their children in the sanctuary and did not feel comfortable with the traditional Sunday School program. By raising awareness of these members, the worship team was able to shape Sunday mornings in a more intergenerational kind of way.

“A second place of important change was guiding the congregation through updated staffing, the implementation of new bylaws, and writing a fresh vision for the 21st century church. My gifts for keeping the big picture in the front and center have been a strong fit with my present congregation as they sought new and exciting ways of being the church together.”

8. Why did it take the PNC so long? Who's on the PNC, anyway?

Good questions. We put together a timeline along with information about the PNC. We encourage you to read through it.

9. You said you operated by consensus. How did that come about?

As a PNC, we wrote, adopted and strived to follow this covenant:

Our Covenant

- Prayer always is the answer.
- Our collective discernment of God's will outweighs our personal preferences.
- We will listen from the heart, to ensure we understand, before responding.
- We will support and respect confidentiality.
- We will support one another.
- We will respect people's time.
- We will strive for consensus but recognize that might not always be possible.

We took a couple of votes on procedural matters in the summer of 2020. All other decisions were made by consensus.

10. Can we watch Pastor Kelly's current church services?

Here is [a link to the church services on YouTube](#). Bear in mind, however, that these are posted after the service and are for anyone who wants to watch later (they may or may not get many views). The actual services are conducted via Zoom video conferencing, allowing members to participate during the service, but for which registration is required. Of note: The congregation developed Tech Deacons who could go to people's homes to help them become comfortable with Zoom.