



January 4, 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Westminster Presbyterian Church,

“To this call, I say YES!”

These were the joyful words of the Rev. Dr. Kelly Wadsworth answering the unanimous call from your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to serve as Westminster Presbyterian’s next pastor.

Pastor Kelly, as she is fondly known, expects to join us in late winter. That provides time to conclude her current pastorate and for her family to find a house in Salem. Pastor Kelly will preach, via online, at Westminster’s worship service at 11 a.m. on January 17. A congregational meeting will be held immediately afterward to vote on confirming her call as our pastor. We ask for your enthusiastic support.

We on the PNC are thrilled and excited that our search has led us to Pastor Kelly. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, an ordained Presbyterian minister since 2006 and a former Army chaplain, she currently serves a UCC congregation in the Seattle area.

In this letter, we’d like to tell you a bit about Pastor Kelly, the PNC process, the agreed-upon Terms of Call and what comes next. We also wish to extend our great appreciation to the Session, the Westminster staff and the congregation for your support of our work.

“From our multiple Zoom discussions with Pastor Kelly, and some very direct questions that speak to the tremendous importance of building relationships both within and outside our congregation, Pastor Kelly impressed me with her welcoming, friendly, creative persona and willingness to listen to all congregation viewpoints when she stressed her ‘desire for a strong partnership that is shared by all and agreed to by all.’” – Matt Hale, PNC member

This has been a lengthy process of mutual discernment between our 10-member PNC and candidates. Starting in February, we met almost every week, often multiple times a week – first in person and then by Zoom. We invested hundreds of hours in reviewing materials on the nearly 100 candidates who applied directly to us or were matched with Westminster through the Presbytery of the Cascades. Our Ministry Information Form – the position announcement based on Westminster’s Mission Study – has been viewed about 700 times on the denomination and Presbytery websites. We also advertised in print and online periodicals.

We considered men, women and clergy couples from across the U.S. and as far away as the Middle East and South Africa. (Per denomination rules, we’re sworn to confidentiality about these other candidates.) As our top candidates emerged, we followed up with written questions. From there, we held numerous Zoom conversations with them, including sharing communion worship services with each finalist. While we were checking their references, they were checking out Westminster. For a good fit – one that lasts – both sides must have a deep, honest understanding of the other.

OVER 

“She has a good grasp on congregational care and how she will ‘map out’ getting to know our congregants.” – Katie Nelson, PNC member

Pastor Kelly stood out in many ways, including her warm, engaging personality; her thoughtful, inspiring sermons; her comfort with both traditional and contemporary worship; her experience as a chaplain in challenging situations; her passion for helping congregations grow; and her personal faith journey.

“She has some great ideas on ways to engage the families, children and especially youth in worship and in the life of the church.” – Lucy Foster, PNC member

During the January 17 congregational meeting, members the congregation will vote on the Terms of Call that the PNC offered and Pastor Kelly accepted: effective salary (salary and housing allowance), \$85,000; medical, pension, death/disability and temporary disability benefits through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) Board of Pensions; annual study leave, two weeks, including two Sundays; study leave support, \$1,500; professional expenses, \$3,500; and vacation, four weeks, including four Sundays. We also will provide approximately \$7,000 from the PNC fund toward moving and related expenses.

“Strategic vision, multi-generational focus, warm and welcoming personality – these are key traits Pastor Kelly will bring to WPC.” – Jay Morris, PNC secretary

*“Pastor Kelly's enthusiasm for the ministry, not afraid to explore new ideas and tackle problems, the freshness of her approach to life. She seems to transmit the joy of her faith.”
– Jackie Hilfiker, PNC vice chair*

More details on the congregational meeting are to come, but please plan to attend.

Beforehand, we encourage you to meet Pastor Kelly through small group Zoom sessions on Friday and Saturday, January 15-16. She is looking forward to getting to know the people of Westminster and for us to get to know her. We'll send out information for how to sign up, or you can call the church office. We hope to have a Zoom session at the church for people who lack internet access. We also will post videos and other materials about Pastor Kelly on the church website. In the meantime, you can contact the PNC via email at SalemPNC@gmail.com with any questions.

Thank you for your faith in us, for your dedication to Westminster and soon for your warm welcome to Pastor Kelly and her family.

In Christ's name,

Dick Hughes, PNC chair; Jackie Hilfiker, PNC vice chair; Jay Morris, PNC secretary; Katie Nelson; Kelsey Weber; Lucy Foster; Matt Hale; Megan Whitney; Scott Butterfield; Terri Crall

P.S. Thanks to Office Manager Jean Severson for her help with this letter and for creating the wonderful Pastor Candidates section on the church website, and to Vik Schaaf and the youth for creating the facilities video that become a great recruiting tool.