

The PNC of First Presbyterian Church Hickory, NC
is excited to introduce...

Dr. Richard Floyd

Friends,

The Pastor Nominating Committee is very excited to present you with our recommendation for the next Senior Pastor at First Presbyterian Church Hickory: Dr. Richard Floyd.

At our called congregational meeting this Sunday, June 19th, you have the opportunity to formally call Richard to lead our congregation and approve the proposed terms of call. In this brochure we are sharing biographical information about Richard, details of the terms of call, and some insights to our search process.

The succession plan for Whit's retirement began 18 months ago. Through the Session and Presbytery's leadership, FPC was able to initiate the process of searching for a new Senior Pastor well in advance of Whit's retirement. First, the Mission Study Task Force completed the Mission Study that helped us focus on who we are and where God is leading us in the future. This important document provided insights and objectives we incorporated into our search process. The PNC was then created and began our work on November 10, 2021.



Our approach included utilizing the denomination website for posting open positions where we were matched to potential candidates throughout the denomination, and received self referrals from interested pastors. We reviewed 44 PIF's (pastor profiles) from this web matching and self referrals. In reviewing these PIF's we each spent time listening to candidates' sermons and researching their experience. Simultaneously, we began networking with centers of influence and seminary contacts to identify individuals who closely fit our search criteria. After more than 30 of these networking conversations, we were led to 22 individuals whom we spoke with about our opportunity. We had 7 Zoom calls with individuals we felt closely aligned to our criteria. From those conversations, we had 3 individuals visit Hickory for more formal discussions. All 3 of these "short list" candidates surfaced from referrals. From there we had a second Zoom call with 2 of the prospects. Through all these steps, the subsequent dialogue, and much discernment, the PNC gained clarity in our work. After our final call with Richard, the PNC enthusiastically and unanimously recognized Richard as the one God has prepared to lead our congregation into this next chapter.

We talked with and met some extraordinary pastors and their spouses throughout this journey - an experience we will always treasure. The PNC thanks you for all your prayers and support over the past 7 months and we look forward to a new era of ministry together with Richard's leadership.

Grace and Peace,

THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Nat Auten, Jim Benton, Mandy Hildebrand, Melvin Meares,
Katherine Mull, Ty Poston, Meaghan Texer

Dr. Richard Floyd

Richard grew up in Merritt Island, Florida, with the beach to the east and Disney World to the west. Both his parents worked in the space program and both were Baptists, so his young life was shaped by church on Sundays and Wednesdays along with stargazing and imaginary interstellar journeys on the other days of the week.

Richard joined the Presbyterian church on his own at the age of 13, looking for a place that welcomed questions and wonder, a place where he felt he could love God with his mind as well as his heart.

He received his M.Div. from Columbia Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. from Emory University, with a focus on theology and creation. His dissertation was published under the title *Down to Earth: Christian Hope and Climate Change*. He has edited a series of devotionals with Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann, and published several articles in the *Feasting on the Word* series.

Richard has served churches in Atlanta and outside Chicago. He also taught at Columbia Theological Seminary. Most recently he was the Senior Associate Pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Atlanta.

Richard and Emily met in Merritt Island and have been married since 1997. Emily is an amazingly talented director of music, currently serving at Shallowford Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, where she conducts a 55-person adult choir and a 60-person youth choir.

Fun fact: Emily was born in Hickory, North Carolina!



Dr. Richard Floyd



The Floyd Family

Richard and Emily have two daughters, Anna and Ella. Anna is a rising senior at the University of Georgia, where she is studying psychology. Ella has just completed a busy senior year and will join her sister at the University of Georgia in the fall. Both love music, performing, and traveling.

Family Pastime

When not parenting, making music, or serving the church, Richard and Emily enjoy seeing live theater and music, cooking, and relaxing in the mountains or at the beach. They also share life with their dog, Moe, who provides gender balance in the house and serves as Richard's spiritual director.



Statement of Faith

I trust in the Divine Mystery

in which we live and move and have our being, which Jesus called Abba, God.
God is the Source and End of all things, the Power that calls the worlds into being,
the Creativity that fills the universe with beauty and life, the Love that weaves
together stardust and stories, giving rise to the human creature.

I trust in Jesus,

who lived Truth,

and empowered Life,

and embodied a Way

that death could not destroy.

He calls us into communities of faith

to do in our time the work he did in his:

to embrace Love with heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as

ourselves, to work for justice and live by compassion, showing radical hospitality

to all, to seek wholeness and healing for all creation, cherishing the web of life of

which we are a tiny part.

I trust in the Spirit

hovering over the face of the deep,

generative of unexpected beauty,

moving restlessly even now,

breaking down hostility and ignorance,

breaking free of hopeless pasts and fearful futures, summoning us to be

expectant and joyful vessels of grace, open to the Spirit's surging in unexpected

places, watching and working, waiting and celebrating, as the beauty and love of

God fill all creation.

–Richard Floyd

Words of Praise...



His sermons are anything but dry or inaccessible. He interprets Scripture in a literary style that is poetic and imaginative. Richard uses language that invites listeners into the heart of the biblical text and they end up seeing God, themselves, and the people and world around them in the light of the Good News. His preaching touches the heart and stimulates the mind, and generates a host of questions designed to lead those listening to an honest examination of their life and faith.

With Richard there is no pretense or self-righteousness. His faith is honest and true and open. And the guy has a dry wit that brings grace and laughter to any situation.



Richard's high degree of emotional intelligence and psychological health is a rare asset among ministers. He is not led by egotistical needs for recognition or credit, and his genuine humility creates an open space for those around him to thrive. He is the consummate "non-anxious presence."



Words of Praise...

"Richard stands out among all the associates with whom I have ever worked. He is an amazing preacher; his sermons are theologically substantive and linguistically poetic. He is emotionally intelligent, intellectually disciplined, and ecclesiastically visionary. He has a deep and ever-expanding faith and is so much fun."

-Pam Driesell

Former Senior Pastor,
Trinity Presbyterian Church,
Atlanta, GA



"Richard Floyd brings many impressive gifts to First Presbyterian Church, Hickory, North Carolina. He is a compelling, imaginative, and poetic preacher, an insightful teacher, a compassionate counselor, and an experienced administrator. He is also deeply committed to the Presbyterian's church's ministry of reconciliation and social justice, especially in regard to the ecological crisis that confronts us, as evidenced by his book Down to Earth (Chalice Press). Richard also has an uncommon ability to be an effective pastor for all ages in the congregation. He will be a collaborative colleague with the staff and an active participant in presbytery. Under his leadership FPC will flourish and grow in its discipleship and service of God and neighbor."

-George W. Stroup

JB Green Emeritus Professor of Theology
Columbia Theological Seminary
Decatur, GA