



**First Presbyterian Church  
Morristown, Tn**

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**A Report of the Pastor Nominating  
Committee  
Sunday, January 5, 2020**



**Introducing  
Rev. Sam Schaus**

## **The Reverend Sam Schaus**

### **Statement of Faith**

I believe in the one, triune God. God is one, yet distinct in three persons, commonly called: God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sustainer. I believe that God created all things, including humans who have erred from the ways that were set before us and are deserving of God's condemnation. Instead, God sent his Son (the Redeemer) to be our mediator to God so that we might be reconciled back to him and one another. He lived on earth as an example for how to interact with all of God's creation. The Son, Jesus Christ, sacrificed himself for the forgiveness of our sins, which have separated us from God, as that way of reconciliation back to God. Christ was resurrected in body to be with God three days after the crucifixion. The Holy Spirit (Sustainer) is active in the world in many ways. The Spirit justifies us through faith and sustains and renews that faith, as well as sanctifying us, making us holy before God. The Spirit also works through the Word proclaimed, through the sacraments, and gives us courage to follow the path to which God has called us. It is through this work of the Spirit that we are able to know Christ and God, form relationships with them, and discern who God has called us to be.

The scriptures-God's words inspired and revealed by God and written by human hands-proclaims the work of the Trinity. It is through these scriptures that we know of the miracles of creation, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the Spirit's work. The scriptures themselves are not to be thought of as God, or to be idolized, but, instead, the Spirit works through them to give their meaning to us. The scriptures continue to have meaning for believers today as they reveal to us the person of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

There are two sacraments, both of which are revealed to us in scripture: Baptism (Matthew 3.13-17, Acts 19.1-10, Colossians 2.6-15) and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22.14-23, 1 Corinthians 11.23-34.) Baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of God's grace. In baptism, we are publicly accepted by Christ, received into Christ's community of believers, and are claimed by God. It is also a sign of the cleansing of our sins. This acceptance and cleansing of sins is a free and gracious gift of God's that we do not deserve, and yet God offers it to us anyway. As a community of believers, we also partake in the Lord's Supper, in which the bread and the wine -symbols of Christ's body and blood- help us to remember Christ's work in the world as a sacrifice for us. The presence of Jesus is made known to us by the Spirit so that we might inwardly be nourished.

As a Church, we are called by Christ as his disciples primarily to worship him by praising and serving God together. Christ told us that serving others is a form of worship, and in Matthew 25 he says, "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." These words continue to shape my faith and how that faith is lived out daily. Our faith is meant to be lived in the present, and every single thing we believe should propel us to praise and worship and serve our Lord as best we can today.

## **Journey of Faith**

As a child growing up in Oklahoma, many of my earliest memories took place inside the church. For the first 13 years of my life we went to a Southern Baptist church where we participated in everything there was to participate in. Sunday mornings consisted of Sunday School and Worship, followed later by Sunday evening worship. Wednesday night consisted of Awana's, where I was, admittedly, not very good at memorizing scripture. During summer we went to VBS and whatever other programs held at the church. Our life as a family, for the most part, consisted around being in church.

Eventually my parents decided it was time to search for a new church home. That search landed us at one of the Presbyterian churches in town where I was immediately thrust into confirmation class. The change was abrupt but the perfect place to start my life as a Presbyterian. I felt more comfortable in that class asking questions and discovering my faith than I had ever felt at our previous church. From then on my life has been a continuous exploration of faith and search for where God is calling me.

As I left home, went to college, and started planning my future, I never even considered life as a pastor until the UKirk campus minister at the University of South Carolina (where I attended college) asked me if I'd thought about seminary as an option after graduation - which I hadn't. I made the decision to attend seminary, not because I thought I was being led toward parish ministry, but because I simply wanted to explore my faith more. During seminary, through much discernment and conversations with mentors, the call to parish ministry became ever present.

Immediately after graduating with a M. Div. as well as a degree in Christian Education, my wife and I moved to LaFollette, TN, where we have served God for nearly 5 years. While the transition from full time student to full time minister had some learning curves, we have been blessed in a myriad of ways. One of the blessings is my time here has deepened my sense of call to parish ministry as well as given me the chance to continue to search the new areas God is calling me.

God is continuing to stretch me, and to have faith in him, as he calls me to different areas of the Christian life. In my current context, an unexpected place God has called me is to be a more active part of our community by helping and serving those in need. This has taken numerous shapes: from helping start a community garden at the church to being asked by Ridgeview Behavioral Services (a health services group based out of Oak Ridge) to be part of a planning grant to try and combat the opioid issue in Campbell County.

As my wife and I have discerned God's call to us away from LaFollette, I know God is at work in our lives, and I am excited to see what God has in store in the years to come.

## *A Prayer from the Pastor Nominating Committee*

*We prayed that when the time came to extend a call to the next minister, God would make it unmistakably clear . . . **and God has!***

*We prayed for our next pastor to be someone who exhibits Christ-like character both publicly and privately . . . **and Sam does.***

*We prayed with the understanding that searching for a pastor is primarily a spiritual process . . . **and it has been.***

*We prayed for unity and peace while searching for a pastor . . . **and we have had that.***

*We now pray that as a church we will come together to welcome and support Sam Schaus as our new pastor.*

*This we pray in Jesus's name.*

*Amen.*

