



November 26, 2024

Dear First Presbyterian Family,

It is our great joy and privilege to announce Reverend Blake J. Daniel as our new Senior Pastor and Head of Staff. Our committee feels honored to have been entrusted with this important work, and we have appreciated the gravity of the task and been sustained by your collective encouragement and prayers. We are confident that Blake is the right person to lead First Presbyterian, and we give thanks and glory to God for the journey that led us to him.

Blake currently serves as Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Sylva, North Carolina, where he has been for the past nine years. Blake holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Spanish from the University of Georgia, and he earned a Master of Divinity from Duke University. Blake and his wife, Erin, have three children: Luke (12), Isaac (10), and Asa (7).

Our committee was initially drawn to Blake as a result of his preaching. He possesses strong gifts in crafting sermons which are engaging, compelling, relevant, and applicable. Beyond this, we were intrigued and have been impressed by his inclination toward collaboration and his desire to provide humble, intuitive, and relational leadership. We have been inspired by the picture painted by his references, detailing his pastoral heart and his seemingly endless capacity to love both those within the church and the ones outside it. In spending time with Blake, we have sensed a firm and unanimous discernment that he is an ideal fit for our church.

We believe Blake embodies many of the criteria we valued highly throughout our search. Blake's love for God is evident and permeating, and his faith springs from a deep well. We believe he will faithfully and humbly seek to discern God's plans for First Presbyterian, encourage and equip us to love each other and our neighbors well, and ultimately honor and uphold our mission statement to "invite all people to say 'Yes' to Jesus with their whole lives." In summary, our committee could not be more pleased to present Blake Daniel as First Presbyterian Winston-Salem's next Senior Pastor.

Blake will begin his transition to First Presbyterian Winston-Salem in January 2025. He will attend the ECO National Gathering with our pastors, Amy and Mike, from January 27th to 29th, and will begin his tenure on campus on Monday, February 3rd.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Blake and his family to our congregation!

With love in Christ,

The Pastor Nominating Committee:

Chuck Hobbs (Co-Chair), Nathan Hatch (Co-Chair), Suzanne Burke, Michelle Collins, Gayle Ford, Whitney Hunter, Scott Herman, David Satterwhite, and Tim Sechrest

*Inviting people to say "yes" to Jesus with their whole lives!*