

INTRODUCING THE REVEREND RYAN WALLACE

How Your PNC Chose Rev. Ryan Wallace

The Presbyterian Church USA links searching congregations and pastoral candidates in an online application site (Church Leadership Connection) in which both parties complete detailed information forms. PCUSA asks the church to select 10 characteristics from its Leadership Competencies list and then matches them with candidates' own choices. PCUSA then sends Pastor Information Forms (PIF) to the searching church that best matches its chosen 10 criteria. Interested candidates can also apply directly to the church through the CLC site.

Your PNC consulted the recent Mission Study and Convergence Report to carefully identify our list of 10 competencies. We developed a scoring system so we could individually judge each candidate on these criteria. Their PIFs include detailed narratives, work history, service to the denomination, and links to videos of sermons and services and links to writings. Between May and October, the PNC evaluated more than 100 PIFs and conducted multiple Zoom interviews. Because congregations had rich video archives during COVID, we also viewed the candidates in multiple sermons and settings not included in their applications.

We reached out to broaden our candidate roster by advertising in Presbyterian Outlook, Presbyterian Today, and The Christian Century, and Fairmount's social media. We turned to former Fairmount pastors for recommendations and also reached out nationally to advisors that these pastors, Jessie, Lindsay and others recommended to ensure the broadest diversity of candidates.

Rev. Ryan Wallace appeared early in our search as an outstanding candidate. He scored at the very top of all candidates against our criteria. He also sought us out, applying to be considered by Fairmount in the midst of what we later learned was considerable interest from other congregations across the US. The committee conducted two long Zoom interviews with Rev. Wallace and were uniformly impressed by his maturity, the seriousness of his spiritual and social justice goals, and his spiritual depth built in a life of service to the church. We spoke in detail to his references, and the Presbytery of the Western Reserve conducted two background checks and a suitability interview. Ryan and his family visited for three days in October to learn more about Fairmount and to meet the search committee individually and in small groups.

He was our unanimous and enthusiastic choice following this careful and prayerful review.



Endorsements from Your PNC

Rev. Wallace distinguished himself as a visionary pastor able to inspire and engage Fairmounters to bring our vision as articulated in the Mission Study to fruition. Equally impressive is his spiritual depth and passion for pastoral care.
- Vanessa Whiting, Chair

Rev. Wallace is extraordinary in so many ways, a born leader, a person of unimpeachable faith, the right person to lead Fairmount forward in the 21st century, to venture beyond our walls to spread the Gospel through the love, kindness, compassion and justice advocated by Jesus, to inspire us in our daily lives, to partner with our remarkable congregation. After thorough due diligence, a moment arrived when the PNC knew it had found the right person. Yes, Rev. Wallace was our no. 1 choice.
- Bill Leahy, Vice-Chair

From my initial review of his PIF, I was impressed with Ryan's background. I was also excited that Ryan sought out Fairmount rather than us finding him. After our first meeting, I was encouraged by Ryan's faith journey and his commitment to bettering the people and communities around him. Ryan has what it takes to do some wonderful things at Fairmount.
- Mike Chevraux

As a father of two young girls, I was impressed by Rev. Wallace's vision for ways the church can help equip families to teach faith to their children. Rev. Wallace noted that on average, children spend about 40 hours per year engaging in various programs with the church, while parents have about 3,000 hours per year with their children. Instead of trying to add a few extra hours to the time kids spend in church, Rev. Wallace believes that the church should play a meaningful role in encouraging, equipping, and engaging parents to incorporate faith into the daily life of their family.
- Peter Bush

I was greatly moved by Rev. Wallace's faith journey and his realization, at an early age, to go out into the community that the Risen Lord has appointed him to serve.
- Carol Adrine

Rev. Wallace's experience as a faith leader and a community organizer parallels Fairmount's dual focus on the spiritual care of its members and its historic commitment to bettering our community. I was impressed to hear from a reference – a retired pastor who is a current congregant – that Ryan leads people through change through careful listening, meeting them where they are, and walking together, through consensus, to a new place. He has both the strategic skills and emotional intelligence to do great things here.
- Sarah Stone

Fairmount's commitment to be a servant leader in its community is as old as the congregation. Though young, Rev. Wallace embodies this same spirit in a new way -- one that can propel us forward as we do the hard work of Jesus to which we've so long been called. In one of our interviews, Ryan shared a prayer of Teilhard de Chardin called Patient Trust. A beautiful prayer, it reminds us to trust in the "slow work of God." We are grateful that with our trust in the Lord, we felt called by Ryan and he felt called to us.
- Raleigh Smith Duttweiler

PCUSA Leadership Competencies Selected by Your PNC

Strategy and Vision | Preaching and Worship Leadership
Spiritual Maturity | Compassionate | Communicator
Change Agent | Willingness to Engage in Conflict
Organizational Agility | Interpersonal Engagement
Motivator | Initiative

MEET REV. WALLACE



Amanda, Cece, Silas, Mae, and Ryan

"When I was 12 years old, I returned home from a mission trip and told my parents that I had decided to become a pastor. It stuck.

"After growing up in the Chicago suburbs, I went south for college to Vanderbilt University. While I never quite acclimated to southern culture, I did fall in love with a genuine southern belle, Amanda. We moved to Chicago when I began studying at McCormick Theological Seminary, and we were married in Amanda's hometown (Chattanooga) in 2011. We have three children—Mae (6), Silas (3), and Cecilia (7 months). Mae loves to read, Silas loves tools, and Cece loves her mom.

"Halfway through seminary, I felt the Spirit calling me into community-based social justice ministry. I graduated with a Master of Theological Studies and spent several years working in community organizing and public policy at two faith-based non-profits—Community Renewal Society and Interfaith Worker Justice. I worked on a wide range of justice issues at the city, county, state, and federal levels, including violence prevention, education funding reform, wage theft, restorative justice, tax policy, re-entry and recidivism, and police reform.

"In addition to my community organizing experience, I also served five PC(USA) congregations—most recently as Associate Pastor for Faith Formation at the First Presbyterian Church of Libertyville in Illinois. I love every aspect of congregational ministry, but what I love most is the people. The call of a pastor—to walk alongside people of all ages and backgrounds in their spiritual journeys—is a blessing that defies description.

"I also have a strong entrepreneurial streak. I've been involved in three church plants in Chicago (including one that raised money by brewing beer), and over the past two years, I've been working to foster connections between churches and social entrepreneurs. I've served on the launch team for the Small Business Growth Initiative at the Lake County Community Foundation and I'm also the co-founder of The Spiritual Entrepreneurship Lab, an ecumenical project that aims to align the mission and resources of churches and social entrepreneurs to create new and innovative ways of doing church and business.

"I have served in other leadership roles to support the Church, including a term on the Mission Committee of the Chicago Presbytery during its relaunch, redesigning a model to distribute more than \$250,000 each year in grants. I serve on the Board of Directors for the Inclusive Collective, a progressive Christian campus ministry with a focus on serving LGBTQ young adults in Chicago. I am also a fellow at the Ecumenical Center for Clergy Spiritual Renewal at Holy Wisdom Monastery."

GENTLE REMINDER

PLEASE HELP US RESPECT THE PRESBYTERIAN PROCESS AND REV. WALLACE'S HOME CONGREGATION BY NOT POSTING OR SHARING NEWS OF HIS CANDIDACY UNTIL THE VOTING IS COMPLETE AND HE HAS HAD TIME TO DELIVER THE NEWS HIMSELF.

YOUR PNC THANKS YOU!

**VANESSA WHITING, CHAIR
BILL LEAHY, VICE-CHAIR**

CAROL ADRINE, PETER BUSH, MIKE CHEVRAUX, RALEIGH SMITH DUTTWEILER, SARAH STONE