

Dave Carlson
Biographical Statement

I'm a second-career pastor – maybe third, but who's counting! Born in Alexandria, VA., and raised in Ohio, I earned my bachelor's degree in Journalism from Ohio University, where my two older brothers also attended college. After six years in newspapers, I realized my altruistic intentions were being usurped by the need to sell more newspapers in an era of "if it bleeds, it leads" and "don't bother me with the facts, I have a story to write." It didn't take too many such utterance from my newspaper colleagues before I decided to transition to Public Relations and Marketing, figuring at least then I could choose the cause I championed. I earned my master's degree in Marketing and Communication from Franklin University, Columbus, OH, while working as Marketing and Development Manager for Lifeline of Ohio, which promotes and coordinates organ and tissue donation.

As I grew in my faith and became more active at my home church (Covenant Presbyterian Church, Columbus, Ohio), I began to sense a call to ministry and a growing desire to strengthen the expression of my faith in my work life. I developed and facilitated a small group ministry for people who are unemployed and co-led a class on spirituality in the workplace.

I approached seminary as an exploratory step toward ordained ministry. While there, I continued in small-group ministry, establishing and facilitating a group for Contemplative Prayer. I was chair of the 'Wholistic Health' Initiative, a student group providing opportunities on campus for health and wholeness. My wife, Yuri, and I met while at a perspective-students weekend at Princeton Theological Seminary, where we were married 19 months later. Yuri was a New Yorker living in Manhattan for 20 years, and I only jokingly claim to have rescued her from that little island city.

In my call as an associate pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC., I have been blessed to experience the fruits of ministry amid the rigors of the pastorate. As I immerse myself in the breadth and depth of ministry, I find that God is able to expand and enhance what I might see and desire. And I am ever surprised and delighted to be a participant in fulfilling God's good purpose. I have found a natural pairing between my training and experience in ministry and my previous work in marketing and communications. So much of the role of a pastor involves understanding the needs of those being served and then responding in a way that meets them where they are and guides them in their spiritual growth and journey of faith. My calling resonates as a ministry of embodiment, meaning that my faith runs deep within me, informs my very being, and is expressed in my knowledge and experience as a pastor of the PC (USA) as together we seek to serve and glorify God.

While I love Westminster Presbyterian Church, I am excited by the prospect of serving First Presbyterian Church-Independence, where I am confident that with God's help my ministry will continue to bear fruit worthy of our calling as the body of Christ.

**Heartland COM Meeting
Oct. 5, 2009**

**David C. Carlson
Statement of Faith**

My faith as a Christian is my most cherished possession, given by God, revealed to me by Christ, and awakened and sustained by the Holy Spirit. God creates, sustains and redeems the world in an expression of God's generative, faithful and loving nature. Humankind is in its fallen condition because of our turning away from God. We are unable to reconcile ourselves to God. In response to this deplorable state, God sent God's only son, Jesus Christ, that we might know the love of our Creator, recognize and repent of our sins, and experience divine mercy and grace.

Jesus Christ, born of woman through a divine act of incarnation, came into a world that rejected him. He freely gave himself over to persecution and death by crucifixion in accordance with God's will to bring salvation to the world and redeem all creation through his rising from the dead. Ascended to heaven, Christ alone is judge of the world. In faithfully submitting to God's will, I am enabled to participate in healing and reconciliation as an earthly experience of our eternal salvation and redemption.

The Holy Spirit empowers me to act righteously that I might live a holy life individually and in community. In response to God's mercy and grace, I am drawn to love and serve the Lord, proclaiming Christ as our only Lord and Savior. God alone by the power of the Holy Spirit transforms knowledge of Scripture into the living Word, in which the Church has its being and authority. I am called to live in a community of faith, which forms the body of Christ and ministers to the world and to one another. The indwelling God is evident in our expressions of ministry to one another, through which we experience comfort and healing. In community, I am called to become Christ's love for those different from myself and accept Christ's love from them.

Christ exists eternally with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Godhead is one, with the Three in One existing and acting in concert. In the incarnation, God became fully human while maintaining full divinity. God's power to love me is stronger than my power to turn from God. While God joins me in grieving my fallen state, I am seen by God in the light of Christ's righteousness. Only with God can I see the wholeness of my true self and others, in which we are never separated from divine love and compassion.

Jesus Christ instituted two sacraments as signs of his act of redemption and salvation. Through my Baptism, I am called to lead a holy and righteous life faithful to God's covenant, being nurtured and nurturing others in the Christian faith, and thankful for the washing away of sin and our rising to new life as the body of Christ. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper signifies Christ's sacrifice for our salvation and reconciliation with God and one another through the body and blood of Christ. Through the divine gift of faith, we spiritually partake of Christ in receiving the benefits of the sacraments.

I believe our remembrance of Christ in the sacraments provides our resurrection hope until he comes again. Jesus is the first fruit of salvation, raised in body and providing an assurance of the resurrection of the dead, at the fullness of the Kingdom that is even now coming into being, and which has been won for us already through Christ Jesus.