

First Presbyterian Church

of Salem

ESTABLISHED: 1821

March 7, 2018

Reformed and Biblical

Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone, All to the Glory of God!

Dear Congregation member,

It is with great pleasure that our Pulpit Nominating Committee introduces to you our candidate for Senior Pastor of our beloved Church. **Rev. Dr. Gary Cecil**. Gary and his wife Shelia currently are serving the Presbyterian Church of Panama City, Florida.

Gary attended Kings College in Tennessee for his undergraduate work receiving his Doctorate from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond Va. He has served pastorates in Georgia, North Carolina, North Dakota and the Pittsburg area.

Gary and Shelia share a joy for life. As a committee we felt that the Pastor that "got" our Mission Study would most likely be the person that God was leading us to. We pulled out twenty-five dossiers at a time, and generally chose five or six individuals that interested us. The Pastors were very diverse, both ethnically and in gender. But spiritually we believed that they most closely represented our core belief of Scripture alone, Grace alone, Faith alone, Christ alone.

Time and time again our initial emails sent to these folks were readily turned away. Either the pastor never answered, told us that we were not a good fit, or stated that they were involved with other potential calls. We pulled well over one hundred PIF's and had three folks that actually were willing to speak to us. After receiving clearance to speak to them two were completely wrong for us. The third was like coming home. Gary Cecil has met all of the criteria that we have set as a committee. His theology is biblically conservative without being judgmental. He believes fully in the Presbyterian doctrine. He believes that Jesus The Christ is our one true Lord and savior, and that the Bible is the very word of God.

Gary was drawn to us because of the honesty and pain expressed in our Mission Study. He is drawn to us because of our hope and faith and our unwavering belief in the destiny of our Church. Gary agrees in our mission to put our resources into helping the City of Salem. We respect and feel empowered by Gary's journey of Faith and his life experiences. We enjoy his warmth and sense of humor, and his self-depreciation. Unanimously as a committee we have selected Gary Cecil to be our Pastoral candidate. We believe that although we did not have a large pool of candidates to interview God has brought both us and Gary in the direction that He has chosen.

We invite you to attend Church March 11th to hear and greet Gary and his wife. The congregation will then have a congregational meeting to approve of Gary being our full time Pastor and also approve his compensation policy. Followed by refreshments of course.

We hope to see you all there,

Blessings,

Reid Willis, Chair

Wendy Johnson

Kim Owens

Chris Davenport

Erin Owens

Earl Gage

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