

Greenwood Community Church, Presbyterian

805 Main Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island, 02886 Tel. (401) 737-1230; Fax (401) 739-8067
The Rev. Dr. Stephen L. Clark, Pastor

August 3, 2016

Dear Members and Friends,

As there is no Fishermen's News published in July or August, I thought it best to send this special mailing to (a) thank you for your ongoing support, enthusiastic participation and record attendance at worship so far this summer (*as evidenced in part by the pictures on the back of this page!*), and (b) announce two initiatives long in the works and approved by Session at the June meeting.

(a) The summer has just been *flying* by, and each worship service has been well attended (*and never lacking for an audience for a Time With The Children!*), worshipful (*the congregational singing has been MOST inspiring!*), and uplifting. I had hoped to get this out the week following the especially inspiring, uplifting and enthusiastic Service of Worship July 17, which included a delightful presentation by our **Vacation Bible School** to a packed house; I do believe we had a record summer attendance that morning! (*Thank you to Lisa David, Virginia Jacobs, John and Christian Black, the thirty-one adult and student volunteers and nearly sixty VBS participants for a most memorable and enjoyable VBS week!*) Thank you to all who have been participating in the Summer Choir, which has been a most refreshing and winsomely inspirational enhancement of our worship service each Sunday.

(b) As you may read in the enclosed pages, the Session formally approved two items at the June stated meeting that are designed to affirm, assist, promote and encourage two of our own who are planning careers in full time Christian ministry in a manner mutually beneficial to them AND the continued stability, growth and vitality of the ministry of our church! As mentioned on the yellow page within, it borders on understatement to say **Eric McNeely** has been a huge blessing to this congregation and is obviously gifted by God for ministry, and I would have been recommending this plan of action for **Stephen Clark** even if I weren't his (*proud!*) father ... I am privileged to be pastor of a congregation that has had VERY much to do with the spiritual development, affirmation and development of these gifted young men, and it really is among a church's highest honors to see those raised in her pews going on to pursue the high call and high privilege of a career in ministry. Watch for more information that will be forthcoming in the September **Fishermen's News!**

As many of you know, Steve is currently serving as a summer ministry intern at the Calvin Presbyterian Church in Shoreline, WA, a suburb of Seattle. I will be flying to the west coast to be part of his final Sunday (*August 21*) there, and then we will be driving cross country back to Rhode Island in time for his enrollment at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary this fall (*please pray that we'll make it; the minivan already has 198,000 miles on it!*). **Eric McNeely** will be filling the pulpit **August 21**, and special guest **Mr. Sean Hunley**, the new headmaster at the Barrington Christian Academy, will fill our pulpit **August 28**. Blessings and best regards for a joyful remainder of your summer!

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Clark, Pastor



Welcome, new members Bob & Karen Hocking ... pictured with Bob's former babysitter, Betty Stacey ...and congratulations, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen (Sandra Cook) Hall!



TO: Personnel Committee
FROM: Stephen L. Clark
SUBJECT: Proposal regarding Stephen Clark and Eric McNeely

(with possible benefits for pastor's anticipated sabbatical; this is the original June 8 proposal slightly updated and edited)

- I. I propose the creation of a **Ministry Intern** position commencing **September 2016** on a part time (10-15 hours) basis for Greenwood Community Church, Presbyterian. More specifically, I would like to have us formally hire church member **Stephen Louis Clark** for the position; Stephen will begin full time studies at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary this fall.

Be assured I'm making this recommendation in my capacity as pastor; please know I would be making this recommendation even if I were not Steve's father. Steve has been a part of this congregation since he was a toddler, and as pastor of this congregation, I would love to see us do all we can to help encourage, train and foster the calling of one of our own to the pastoral ministry. Stephen is a gifted, talented, credentialed and experienced candidate in his own right; see the enclosed copies of a pastoral reference letter I wrote for Gordon Conwell and a letter he wrote for his present employer, Calvin Presbyterian Church in Shoreline, WA.

I envision the **Ministry Intern's** responsibilities would involve much of the work previously covered under the Director of Young Adult Ministries position vacated by Matthew Barber: i.e., coordinating, leading, working with, and/or overseeing all young adult ministries both present and potential, such as 29Eleven, Confirmation Class, Junior and Senior High Sunday School, and other activities related to the church's ministry to youth and young adults (e.g., retreats, special services, events, mission trips, as well as working with and recruiting adult volunteers), with the added occasional pastoral responsibilities of pulpit supply, worship leadership, accompanying the pastor ministering to/visiting with the sick and shut-in and participating in various meetings of the committees and boards of the church. The **Ministry Intern** would also work in tandem with the Director of Family Ministries and the Director of Music, especially in areas where the mutual ministry activities overlap (e.g., pageants, presentations, rehearsals, staffing for child care, planning for Youth Sunday).

I further recommend the starting salary for Ministry Intern be the same as starting salary for the Director of Family Ministries and Director of Young Adult Ministries in 2012. We presently have **\$8,000** budgeted in the 2016 Personnel line item 4375 (*Director of Young Adult Ministries*); as employment would commence September, this salary would come well under that budgeted amount.

(Also, for what it's worth, a quick review/comparison of financial statements of May 31, 2015 and 2016 show the following: Total expenses to date: May 31, 2015 = \$158,881; May 31, 2016 = \$133,324 ... which means that going into the summer we've spent \$25,557 less than this time last year. Total income to date: May 31, 2015 = \$137,256; May 31, 2016 = \$152,139 ... which means that going into the summer we've received \$14,883 more than this time last year)

- II. **Eric McNeely** is working toward associate's degree at CCRI, and is pursuing a sense of call to Christian ministry and/or social service. He has taken twelve courses to date for 33 credits, and needs 27 additional credits to achieve an associate's degree, and has spent approximately **\$6,000** on his continuing education. It borders on understatement to say that Eric has been a huge blessing to this congregation, and continues to serve with energy, imagination, devotion and love. Please understand Eric has not asked for any compensation and/or even any acknowledgement for his contributions to the life and ministry of this congregation; this is solely my initiative.

I propose the church affirm Eric's obvious giftedness and sense of call to the ministry, encourage him in this educational endeavor, help him achieve credentials for full-time mission and/or ministry, as well as express our appreciation for his

- (a) stepping to the plate to help carry the youth fellowship leading up to and following the former Director of Young Adult Ministries' sudden departure last August,
- (b) performing so admirably in his capacity as Moderator of the Board of Deacons these past four years,
- (c) winsome and engaging work with the Sunday School children each week

... by **reimbursing** his education expenses to date and **offering to cover** additional tuition costs to acquire his associate's degree at CCRI.

I propose the initial \$6,000 reimbursement be drawn from the following restricted accounts:

- \$3,000 from 2040, Christian Education Grant Fund
- \$2,000 from 2020, 29Eleven Fund
- \$1,000 from 2106, Mission (pending Mission Committee approval)

Anticipating the future expenses of covering additional tuition costs, I further propose we cover these under the present line items for Mission Contingencies (4190) and Christian Education College Scholarship (4153), budgeting accordingly for 2017.

At this time I am making **no** proposal to cover anything beyond his associate's degree, which I think will entail a minimum of another two, maybe three, years at Eric's current pace. In the next year(s), we'll (Eric and me) be looking into opportunities to gain him necessary credentials for ministry employment; for example, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and Fuller Theological Seminary are two institutions with various diploma programs and a few Masters programs which accept an associate's degree.)

Additional Potential Benefits for Anticipated Pastoral Sabbatical: In 2018 (or later), with Steve having two or more years experience here (along with seminary training, plus an intensive three-week mentoring program in January 2018 at the 2,000 member Bonita Springs Presbyterian Church, who is sponsoring his scholarship) and Ginny Jacobs and John Black providing additional continuity and stability (and whose initiatives have continued to blossom since their respective hirings), a three month absence of the pastor will be much easier to manage. There'll be stability, continuity, experience, energy and competency all around, and I'll feel much better about taking the sabbatical required by Presbytery that I'm supposed to take about that time. We may not have to hire the services of any interim (and unemployed) pastor and the unknown risks that entails; we might just get by with the occasional pulpit supply.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen L. Clark, Pastor

MINISTRY INTERN Tentative Job Description

- POSITION:** The position of **Ministry Intern** is a part time position (*averaging 10-15 hours per week*) designed to provide a student (*one enrolled in graduate studies at an accredited theological seminary*) practical experience, mentoring and training while performing necessary and vital services in various aspects of the ministry of Greenwood Community Church, Presbyterian.
- ACCOUNTABILITY** The **Ministry Intern** is accountable to the Session through the Personnel Committee and will be directed in her/his work by the Pastor/Head of Staff.
- RESPONSIBILITIES:** The **Ministry Intern** will help coordinate, lead, work with, and/or oversee all young adult ministries both present and potential, such as 29Eleven, Confirmation Class, Junior and Senior High Sunday School, and other activities related to the church's ministry to youth and young adults (*e.g., retreats, special services, events, mission trips, as well as working with and recruiting adult volunteers*).
- As directed and/or accompanied by the Pastor, the **Ministry Intern** will also have occasional responsibilities of pulpit supply, worship leadership, ministering to and/or visiting with the sick and shut-in, and participating in various meetings of the committees and boards of the church.
- The **Ministry Intern** will work in tandem with the Director of Family Ministries and the Director of Music, especially in areas where the mutual ministry activities overlap (*e.g., pageants, presentations, rehearsals, staffing for child care, planning for Youth Sunday*).

(From Calvin Presbyterian, Shoreline, WA – “What relevant experience do you bring to this position? What appeals to you about this position?”)



To address these two questions, I think a letter of brief explanation might be in order, as God has led me on a rather unusual journey. I am a 21 year old senior college student at Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio, graduating in May with a Liberal Arts degree, concentrating in theology and philosophy and minoring in Greek and Bible. Over my years in high school and college I developed a passion for pastoral ministry, and plan to attend seminary in the near future. I currently reside in Warwick, Rhode Island, where I grew up in a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation pastored by my father .

In terms of experience, I have sought to engage in active ministry and leadership throughout my time at school. I wanted to prepare for a hopeful future in pastoral ministry, and as I grew and developed this turned more into a passion to serve God and shepherd His people, drawing them towards Christ. During high school at Masters Regional Academy, I served as student body president for two years while leading a Bible study and participating on a leadership team. At my church, I co-led another Bible study for the youth fellowship I regularly attended for junior high and high school, was ordained as a deacon, served as activity leader for our Vacation Bible School and participated in six local summer mission trips in the Philadelphia and Boston areas. During this time, two of my biggest passions developed: preaching and discipling. As a freshman at Cedarville University I was elected by my class as the freshman class chaplain, with opportunity to coordinate and preach at one chapel each semester to a congregation of 3,000+ students and faculty. I also was a member of class council, whose responsibilities mostly consisted of event planning, and helped lead a youth group at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Xenia, OH.

In my sophomore year I was again elected by my class to be sophomore class chaplain. In my junior year, however, I won school-wide election to the office of Student Government Association (SGA) chaplain. My specific responsibilities as SGA Chaplain involved coordinating the Chaplain's Council (*an eleven member team of individual class chaplains and ministry leaders*); organizing, leading and preaching at nine SGA chapels per semester; working with the student government of Cedarville in communicating with administration, leading and planning student events; and serving and participating in various Student Life capacities throughout the year. I was re-elected by the student body to serve as SGA Chaplain my senior year. Over the past two years I have led and spoken at twenty-three chapels and developed a mentorship and fellowship program for the Chaplains' Council, working with and mentoring each class chaplain. Through this position and other outlets, over the past four years I have had the opportunity to meet regularly with pastors, professors and mentors, fill the pulpit at churches in Ohio, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, work as a camp counselor with students from ages 7-17 during a summer in Ohio, serve on a weeklong missions trip to the Dominican Republic where I helped facilitate a \$35,000 philanthropy project with SGA, study a summer abroad in Israel, and work as a waiter over summers and breaks (*that last one may not really have anything to do with my college experiences, but it certainly has given me a lot more insight into people!*).

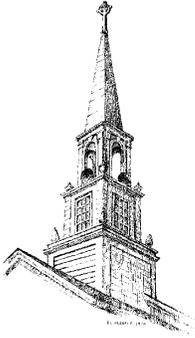
After my experiences over the past several years, God has made evident to me that I love working most in ministry. I have a particular passion for church ministry. My desire is to be used in any way possible to attract those around me to Christ, whether through preaching, conversation, or simply sharing experiences together. Considering what route I would take after college, though, has challenged me for some time. As I hope to eventually go into pastoral ministry I intended for seminary to be in the very near future, but was considering taking some time to work in a church or ministry environment in order to gain some experience as well as save some money for my graduate education.

From what I have researched on Calvin's website, the Youth and Family Ministry Associate position strikes me as an ideal opportunity to serve, learn, thrive, love, and minister in a growing, committed, engaging and healthy church fellowship. Also, from reading Calvin's process of denominational discernment, I strongly resonate with and admire the approach Calvin has taken to the ongoing challenges in the PC(USA) ... affirming its stance on Biblical authority while remaining in the denomination. I also resonate with Calvin's mission and goals; I think a church must not lose focus on shepherding and shaping those in the congregation, which Calvin does through its spiritual formation process, while simultaneously reaching out to the surrounding community, which Calvin does through its various missions. In Calvin I see a church with whom I can readily align in vision and doctrine, a church that is growing and blessing its members and community, a church in which I could grow and thrive as I prepare for a vocation of professional ministry, and a church I believe I would well serve now with my experience and abilities.

I will be graduating after this upcoming semester and am presently uncommitted following May 7. I am certainly interested in the position. I thank you for honoring me by your consideration, and am encouraged by your apparently faithful ministry and witness in Seattle. I am confident God is at work in all of our lives, and will lead us in the directions we should go.

Sincerely,

Stephen Clark



Greenwood Community Church, Presbyterian

805 Main Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island, 02886 Tel. (401) 737-1230; Fax (401) 739-8067
The Rev. Dr. Stephen L. Clark, Pastor

November 18, 2015

Office of Admissions
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
130 Essex Street
South Hamilton, MA 01982

Supplemental Letter of Reference for Stephen Louis Clark

To Whom It May Concern:

Although I have written a number of letters of recommendation for many deserving young people in the churches I've served in over three decades of pastoral ministry, I can honestly say it gives me the greatest pleasure to write this particular recommendation. Not only is Stephen one of the most morally principled, responsibly industrious, academically accomplished, highly gifted and personably likeable young men I've known, he is also my son.

I have very much enjoyed seeing Stephen grow up to become a sincerely faithful, thoroughly dependable, winsomely gracious, scrupulously principled, creatively resourceful, intrinsically competent, innately self-motivated and highly intelligent young man. In his young adult years I've observed he is well liked, respected, and sought after among his peers, and I'm told time and again by family, friends and church members that all who know him speak well of him. People consistently find Stephen to be a thoroughly pleasant, respectfully courteous, quietly unassuming and engaging young man who relates well to people of all ages. Throughout his life, Stephen has always been actively involved in the church I've served, and has done so by choice, never by my coercion. He has been especially active in the youth fellowships, the Sunday School, our Vacation Bible School (*eight years as a child participant and four as the VBS activities leader*) and as an assistant worship leader who has also filled our pulpit on occasion. Five years ago he became the youngest person in our congregation's seventy year history to be elected and ordained to the ministry office of Deacon.

As I'm sure he's mentioned elsewhere in his application, Stephen has twice won school-wide annual election to the post of Student Government Association (SGA) Chaplain at Cedarville University. Among other duties, the SGA Chaplain is responsible for organizing and leading Cedarville's well-attended daily chapel, including preaching, eighteen times a year (*average attendance @ 3,000*). I've been able to attend twice in person, and watched others via online streaming; I've been both proud and humbled as I watched Stephen mature and develop into a passionately gifted speaker and engaging preacher who has an obvious and clear call to pastoral ministry, and who is miles (*actually, light years!*) beyond where his father was at his age.

On another personal note, I should add Stephen lost his mother to cancer when he was five years of age; as I never remarried, he and his two sisters have endured being raised by their father ever since. From an early age, Stephen consistently displayed both an innately tenacious spirit and an impeccably good character that has greatly contributed to the stability and happiness of our otherwise bereaved home; he has always been a well-behaved, ungrudgingly obedient and eager-to-please son, as well as a wonderfully gracious and gently loving brother to his sisters. I have every confidence he will do well in any endeavor he undertakes.

Again, it is with the highest pleasure I submit this recommendation. If I may be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Clark
(D.Min. 2007, GCTS)