

A Word from Wes

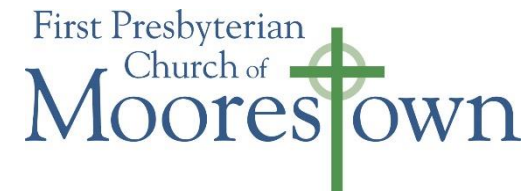
Few words can express my gratefulness and enthusiasm at being presented as a candidate for Associate Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown. In many ways, this feels like a homecoming. My ministry began here as a seminary intern over 14 years ago, my children were baptized here, I was ordained as a chaplain in your beautiful sanctuary, and when I was serving the Lord in other ministries, my family continued to worship alongside of you. FPC has always been near and dear to my heart. Your love of Christ, passion for missions, near and far, and commitment in being and becoming the hands and feet of Christ is inspiring. Should you choose to move forward with my candidacy, I am confident we will work alongside one another in making the Kingdom of God a reality "on earth as it is in Heaven."

Over the last 2 ½ years, your Associate Pastor Nominating Committee has worked tirelessly, in the midst of a global pandemic no less, to identify a candidate with a shared vision for the church and gifts to make those dreams a reality. Over the course of several conversations via Zoom, it became clear that my gifts matched the needs of the church and the church's gifts matched my needs as a minister.

Who am I? I am a recovering sinner - redeemed by the grace of our Lord, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I am not perfect, but I make every effort to be refined by the Holy Spirit's work within me. I am tremendously humbled and honored to be considered as the next Associate.

Bill Walker – friend - Wes has a deep love for the Lord and a faith that has matured through his work in the private sector as well as in the church. He has a sharp questioning mind that digs deep into scripture, that is powerfully combined with a gift for teaching and preaching. He relates equally well to young and old and will be a welcome addition to FPC Moorestown.

Arthur Aston - Executive Director, Build Jake's Place – In recent years I've known Wes as a member of the board for Build Jake's Place. He is a good listener, and able to consider different opinions. He affirms people's ideas, but is able to ask good questions that help the board see issues they may have missed. I met Wes at King's Christian School in 7th grade where he was caring and wise beyond his years. He is accepting, and he loves people. I think that is the best way to reflect the love of Christ.



The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee
of
First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown

is pleased to introduce



The Reverend Wesley Allen
as its candidate for Associate Pastor

Wesley Allen “Wes” grew up in Marlton, New Jersey where he and his family attended Wiley Church. Wes met his future wife, Jennifer, at Wiley (though they didn’t start dating until college). They were both active in the life of the church; participating in weekly church school programs, worship, youth group and annual youth excursions, including trips to Action Park, mission trips to Nebraska and Russia, an annual summer youth retreat at Roxbury Holiness Camp in Orrstown, Pennsylvania, and the church’s Vacation Bible School. It was at Roxbury, in the summer of sixth grade, that Wes accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Two years later, at the same camp, Wes had the first of many conversations with his pastors about a sense of calling to pastoral ministry.

Wes went on to attend Temple University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Theater. While attending Temple, Wes commuted weekly to New York City to study and perform improvisational theater with Second City and had the opportunity to open for comedians Jim Norton and Artie Lang. After graduating, Wes moved to Chicago and continued studying improv at Second City and the Annoyance Theater. In Chicago, Wes began asking himself the question, “What are you doing with your life?” He sought an answer in the Word of God and in prayer. One evening, while praying, Wes vividly recalled, as if he were there, his eighth-grade self sitting with his childhood pastors sharing his sense of call to ministry. The next day Wes shared the vision with his pastor and began applying to seminary.

Three years later, Wes graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and worked full-time as the Director of Youth Ministry at First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown. In 2013, Wes was ordained as a chaplain, working full-time to build spiritual networks for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 2014, he was recognized by SJ Biz Magazine as a “Top 20 Under 40” for his chaplaincy work and nominated for SJ Magazine’s “Man of the Year.” That same year Wes was invited to work on a national project, *Putting Faith to Work*, with

Vanderbilt University where he and a team developed a guide for faith communities to use in helping people with disabilities secure meaningful and competitive employment opportunities. Concurrently, Wes worked as a part time supply pastor at New Covenant Presbyterian Church in Mt. Laurel where he led weekly worship, preached, and moderated Session. He eventually took a full-time position in talent acquisition with Holman Enterprises and later became a service consultant at Holman Ford Lincoln of Turnersville. Since March 2021, Wes has provided pastoral leadership at St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Laurel Springs as its part-time parish associate.



Wes and Jen married in 2007. They have two children, Vivian (11) and Jacob (7), and a 5-month-old puppy named Artie. Vivian is a rising sixth grader at Moorestown Upper Elementary. She loves dancing and singing. Jacob is a rising second grader at Baker Elementary. He enjoys street hockey, video games and is excited about starting flag football this fall. Jen holds down the fort at home as a professional mom. Prior to staying home, Jen was the Residential Director at Quality Management Associates where she helped transition people with disabilities from institutions to homes throughout Burlington and Camden Counties. Jen is a fabulous cook (the best meatballs and chili), enjoys spending time with family and friends, the Jersey shore, and attending concerts with Wes (they have seen Bruce Springsteen over 50 times together). In his free time, Wes enjoys fly-fishing, playing guitar and harmonica and singing with his band, *The Trophy Husbands*, training in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (blue belt) and writing satirical sketches.

