

Natasha Sudderth

Associate Pastor – First Presbyterian Church of Ocala

Statement of Faith

Journey of Faith

Terms of Call

NATASHA SUDDERTH SCHOONOVER
533 CONE ROAD, BLOWING ROCK NC

STATEMENT OF PERSONAL FAITH

I believe, “in life and in death we belong to God.” This one living and triune *God*- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- is sovereign- creating, sustaining and ruling all things. God’s love for us is known in the life, death and resurrection of *Jesus Christ*- the only love in all creation with power to bring life to a broken world. In the midst of this brokenness, political upheaval, poverty and war, Jesus, was born. Fully human and fully divine, he would be called Emmanuel, “God with us”. Jesus inaugurated the reign of God and new creation in humanity- giving a new name to being joined together in community, calling us to a greater love for one another. In his preaching the good news was heard, and his ministry was one of healing and restoration. Jesus was unjustly condemned to death and crucified, suffering pain and death on a cross. After three days, grief turned to joy as God raised Jesus from the dead and the power of sin and death were overcome. Though he ascended to the Father he brought life to the church sending the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit animates the church and continually renews all things in new life, always moving and acting within us. This movement unifies us in the Body of Christ, claiming us in the waters of Baptism, and nourishes us with the Bread of Life and Cup of Salvation. *Human beings*, created in God’s image, are part of the goodness of God’s creation in its divine diversity. Yet our sin distorts and destroys, and is rebellion against God, others and ourselves. No human striving or action on our part can free us from our own sin. Though powerful, sin is *not* stronger than God (Guthrie). God’s just mercy works to restore and renew creation.

Scripture contains within it what is necessary to know God and the Christian life. It contains God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments. Right interpretation of that Word takes place within the church with the church. *The church* is the living witness of Christ and is empowered by the Holy Spirit. This community makes tangible the love of God in the world as the living, breathing body of Christ, in the church ecumenical. By the power of God through the Holy Spirit, this body of believers is empowered to serve in Christ’s ministry with humility, unified and diverse through one Baptism.

The *Sacraments* of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are instituted by God and commended by Christ. They define who we are *to* God and *with* God, and in turn, who we then become *to* and *with* all others. In them, we see the real presence of Christ in the church. They seal believers in their redemption, claim them giving them a new identity, and mark them for service. Baptism happens only once, affirming God’s faithfulness and unchanging love and adoption of us, unifying us with the body of Christ. Lord’s Supper continually nourishes and sustains us by God’s grace, renewing us as part of Christ’s mystical body, recipients of salvation through him. God in Christ stands at our beginnings and our endings, signaling our Christian hope in the renewal of all things, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Together with all the saints who have gone before us and with those who will come after, we live in/by the hope and assurance that in all things we belong to God.

FAITH JOURNEY

It is said that the way we view ourselves is usually very different from the way others view us, and I find that especially true when it comes to God. That is, God sees us in our completeness, all at once. In one moment God sees our past, present, and our future. We cannot see it. We see ourselves in the pictures that capture us in fragments of past, and we see our present selves every morning as we see our ever changing reflections in the mirror. Growing up in a small mountain community, my early Christian life was nurtured within an active congregation where my mother served as choir director. The fellowship of this church was a large part of my early Christian formation and understanding of Christian community. I began to sense God at an early age and could make out small traces of God at work in my life and community. In time, my ability to sense God and listen to God developed more and more. Since my mother's gifts were in music and I possessed a lovely singing voice, the church nudged me in that direction. That began the process of discerning my gifts and the person I was within my Christian community.

I was nurtured well in that Christian community that played a large role in my life all the way through my high school years. However, there were areas of my life that caused a great deal of turmoil. While all areas of church life naturally flowed for me, learning and education did not. Beginning in my early childhood through high school, I struggled with school. It was late in my education when teachers and counselors discovered my learning disabilities/differences. This was the backdrop to my enlisting in the military the last year of high school. After nine years of service I deployed to Iraq for a 13-month tour. Upon reflection, I know these events were the rich soil from which God formed a part of my Christian vocational call, and began a season of discerning my call to ordered ministry. This sense of call and movement of the Spirit, has grown over time, making for a rather long story. The heart of the matter is that a very loving and persistent God has shaken the foundation of my life with a call. If I were to articulate this story in detail, my words would fall exceedingly short in capturing the tectonic movement in my life as I have experienced the depth of God's call.

I began to pray as I entered time of discernment, a period that I would describe as one of great confusion and great clarity. I discovered the support of my community and guidance of God towards discovering my specific gifts for ministry, affirming areas where I showed strength. Through periods of trial and error, I continued to pray. I discovered God working in my life and through my community to condition and prepare me for my task in ministry. Discernment during this important time took on many faces and required strength, courage and the support and insight of my academic and church community. Though this time was difficult, it was equally fulfilling and joyful. Great strides and disappointments were always God filled and indicators of forward movement.

God has a way of transforming entire worlds in one breath. My faith journey could be read as one big contradiction really. Yet I have been called by a God who sees me in my completeness, all at once. In one moment God sees our past, present, and our future. This journey has given me a clearer understanding of myself and ministry in the church. For all that I have learned I am grateful that I can only see today and yesterday, because the road has been long and challenging. Yet when you are called by God, no distance will keep you from hearing and no other work will do.

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
PASTORAL CALL
(For Pastor or Associate Pastor)**

The First Presbyterian Church (USA) of Ocala, Florida, belonging to the Presbytery of St. Augustine, being well satisfied with your qualifications for ministry and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit on whose service will be profitable to the spiritual interests of our church and fruitful for the Kingdom of God, earnestly and solemnly calls you, Natasha Sudderth, to undertake the office of Associate Pastor (Pastor/ Associate Pastor) of this congregation, beginning June 1, 20 18, promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and allegiance in the Lord. That you may be free to devote full time (full time/part time) to the ministry of the Word among us, we promise and obligate ourselves to pay you the following:

A. Personal Compensation

1. Annual Cash Salary	<u>30,000</u>
2. Housing Allowance	<u>24,000</u>
3. Utilities/Furnishings allowance (if paid to minister)	<u> </u>
4. Medical supplement (if applicable)	<u> </u>
5. OPTIONAL SECA (above 50% required SECA)	<u> </u>
6. Deferred income	<u> </u>
7. Other income (specify <u>403b</u>)	<u>2700</u>
8. Manse amount (30% of lines 1-7)	<u> </u>
9. TOTAL EFFECTIVE SALARY	<u>56700</u>

B. Expenses

10. Reimbursable Business and Professional Expenses	
a. Automobile expenses	<u>3500</u>
b. Books and subscriptions	<u>500</u>
c. Other expenses	<u> </u>
11. Continuing Education allowance	<u>1000</u>
12. TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>5000</u>

C. Required benefits

13. Major Medical and Disability (21% of line 9)	<u>14175</u>
14. Pension (12% of line 9)	<u>6804</u>
15. REQUIRED 50% SECA Reimbursement	<u>4131</u>
16. Other (specify <u>opt death & dental</u>)	<u>1744.44</u>
17. TOTAL BENEFITS	<u>26854.44</u>

D. Vacation and Leave

Vacation 4 weeks Study Leave 2 weeks
 Moving Expenses \$ to be paid
 Sabbatical leave after seven years of service

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PACKAGE \$88,554.44