

## Exhibit A-2

### Journey of Faith John David Bryant

At my core, I believe that I am called to be “a friend for the journey.” As Charles Spurgeon, tells us, “We are all mere beggars showing other beggars where to find bread.” As we journey together, we beggars are constantly showing one another where to see Jesus, the Bread of Life.

I was born in 1970 to a family in which the women on the paternal side of the family prioritized faith. The women were church establishing, church supporting Missionary Baptists. The men on the paternal side practiced a faith that might best be described as, “Do as I say, not as I do.” The men and women on the maternal side of the family were rigid, ultra-conservative Pentecostals.

Within this environment, I came to faith gradually, increasingly, and this culminated in a faith crisis during my senior year in high school. My great grandmother died 10.21.87, and within 6 weeks her daughter, Grandmother, was diagnosed with stage 3B breast cancer. It was a “dark night of the soul” that stretched for many nights. Ultimately, on the lowest day of days, I found myself at the Lutheran Student Center on the campus of the University of Georgia. I walked through big red doors that had accidentally been left unlocked by a pastor who found me hours later in the chapel.

On that afternoon, Pr. Ed Ralph prayed with me, was present to me, shared a view of grace that was far different than any I had ever heard. Before long, I immersed myself in the works of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Reformers: Martin Luther, John Calvin, Martin Chemnitz, etc. I read anything I could find: Luther’s Small Catechism, Luther’s Large Catechism, the Heidelberg Disputation, the Great Scots Confession, the Institutes of Religion, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Book of Concord, etc. I embraced the Five Solas of the Reformation: Scripture alone, Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, and glory to God alone. In time, I came to see myself as a “Lutheropalian,” one as at home in the Anglican Tradition as in the Lutheran tradition.

By the end of my senior year of college in '93, I was engaged to a Lutheran girl. And within two years of meeting, we were married. Over the years, we have found that we shared a common mission of being “friends for the journey” with whosoever God brings our way. A big change in that business of journeying with others came our way when I was ordained in 2011. The discernment to holy orders/rostered ministry/ordained ministry brought a new aspect to living out the call to be a friend for the journey. Jesus has stretched me, pruned me, empowered me, challenged me, and tenderized me though those with whom I have journeyed. Jesus has changed me through those who Jesus has called to journey with me.

I see the potential call to serve with the good people at First Presbyterian-Perry, FL as another adventure in journeying with others as they journey with me. I will love them with the love of Jesus and let them love me with the love of Jesus, too. And, in so

doing, together we will love those in North Florida as a team of “beggars showing other beggars where to find bread.”