

Candidate for Associate Presbyter

Rev. Chrissy Westbury



Chrissy Westbury (she/her/hers) is first, and foremost, a people person. She assumes that everyone is just a friend waiting to happen! One of her earliest childhood memories is taking advantage of distracted parents to march down the aisle at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Georgia and introduce herself to former President Carter. She works to forge connections and encourage community everywhere she goes. A high-energy extrovert, Chrissy loves preaching, teaching, and advocating for community connectedness in the church and in the world. She has served with the people of First Presbyterian Church, Kalamazoo since August 2017.

Chrissy has a passion for working to make the world, and the community around her a more loving, welcoming, inclusive and anti-racist place. She volunteers with local community theatre groups, Animal Rescue Project, and a number of groups working locally to advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and working against systemic racism and poverty.

At LPTS, Chrissy was the recipient of the Norma Rich Merit Scholarship, The Burton Z. Cooper Prize in Constructive Theology, The Melanie Lane Preaching Award, The Bernice Bean and Gladys Kendall Prize for Academic Excellence, and The Fielding Lewis Walker Award in Doctrinal and Historical Theology. She served on Seminary Council and was a worship coordinator. She did internships at Second Presbyterian Church and Peewee Valley Presbyterian Church because she deeply values the varied gifts and experiences brought by congregations of all sizes.

Education

Chrissy graduated from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in May 2017 with a Master of Divinity degree, a Master of Arts (Religion), and a certificate in Educational Ministry.

Before entering seminary, she served as Director of Christian Education at Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church in Midland, MI.

Training

She enjoys learning new things and collecting new experiences. In the past few years, she's attended conferences including APCE, NEXT Church, and the Colnspire Anti-racism Conference, become a certified kitchen manager (to make FPC's weekly meal for our neighbors Health Department approved) and a notary public.

She is currently doing training in transitional ministry and working on a certificate in executive leadership through Princeton Seminary's Iron Sharpening Iron program.

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Her family includes her spouse, Dirk Westbury (he/him) their daughter, Daphne (she/her) who is a freshman at Central Michigan University, and their younger child, Pan (she/they/them) who is a sophomore at Kalamazoo Central High School. They also share their home with their dogs Ace and Echo, their cat, Calvin (a seminary stray who “providentially” wandered their way one January), and an axolotl named Alox.



Statement of Faith

Rev. Chrissy Westbury



I believe in God...

I believe that humanity is created in the image of God, and that the essential image of the Trinitarian God in which we are created is relational and abundant. The trinity exists essentially and eternally in dynamic love, and it is that love that spilled over into the creation of the world.

I believe in Jesus Christ...

I believe that Christ's message is one of radical love. Jesus preached a counter-cultural and seemingly paradoxical message of love for one's enemies, servant leadership, and a Savior who chose not to save himself. Jesus, "though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross." (Philippians 2) We are called to follow Christ's example, and to live into his commandments – Love God, and love one another, no exceptions.

I believe in the Holy Spirit...

I believe that the Spirit continually reaches toward each of us, individually and communally, drawing us closer to God and to one another. I believe that the Spirit bestows various and diverse gifts upon us, and that we have both the joy and the responsibility to use those gifts for the glory of God and the betterment of the world. As the Brief Statement of Faith reminds us, the Spirit gives us courage in the face of a broken and fearful world - courage to pray, courage to connect, courage to work with others for justice, freedom and peace, courage to unmask idolatries and to hear (and amplify) the voices of people long silenced.

Statement of Faith

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I believe in the church...

I believe that we all do things that separate us from God and from one another – we sin, individually and communally. But I believe that we are better together than we are apart. I believe that we are forgiven by the grace of God through Jesus Christ and loved irresistibly and unendingly. I believe that we are called, not to open doors, but to point toward the wide-open doors that God has already established. I believe we are called to feed people, physically and spiritually. Jesus is the bread of life, and we are called to share this bread abundantly! The sacraments reflect this openness and connectedness as we are deeply connected to one another and to God through the waters of baptism and the Lord's Supper – both available to all who wish to partake.