

Dear Members and Friends of Gilbert Presbyterian Church,

As announced during worship this past Sunday, your Pastor Search Task Force is elated to introduce you to Pastor George Prohaska, GPC's new Pastor as of May 1st, 2022.

We were blessed to have Presbytery help in the search process and did not have to start over with the time-consuming tasks that the original PNC completed. Much thanks to the original PNC for their excellent work! Presbytery also did the initial legwork of contacting potential candidates. Even with all this help, we still went through two different rounds of Pastor Search Task Force committees who reviewed numerous resumes and held many first and second interviews, as well as two in-person visits from potential candidates, one from out of state.

George is a unique candidate in that he is a Certified Ruling Elder (CRE). (See the attached FAQs for details.) He will be commissioned by the Presbytery for his work at GPC on April 30th at the Presbytery meeting in Tucson, and you will be receiving information on how to attend the commissioning service by Zoom.

Session members attended a neutral pulpit on 03/27/22 at John Calvin Presbyterian Church. George designed the entire service including the sermon and the PowerPoint slides which he personally operated. *You can see George in action yourself online at: <https://youtu.be/jxmAa-NefWo>.* Members of John Calvin Presbyterian thanked us for sharing George with them.

George has an impressive history of service with Presbytery, having served as Moderator of Presbytery as well as Chair of the Commission on Ministry. He also has exemplary references (including one from our Presbytery Pastor, Brad Munroe), and both the Pastor Search Task Force and Session feel that George exhibits the qualities we have been looking for in a Pastor.

Here are a few excerpts from his references:

- “George is intelligent, articulate, composed, having a heart for God, open minded, embracing. He expresses his thoughts eloquently as he preaches and is congenial and friendly after the service when talking with congregation members.”
- “He is a clear thinker, strong communicator, level-headed and hearted, calming presence, cares deeply about the church, takes feedback well, does not get defensive, very strong leadership skills.”
- “George works very well with staff and committees. Zero problems in this area. He will handle anyone who is anxious or angry very well.”
- “He is very organized, very faithful to the scriptures, he knows his bible. George is strong when he needs to be and knows when to back away.”
- “George has participated in reconciliation team workshops, as a member of the reconciliation team, and assisting with reconciliation interventions. He also moderated a

difficult situation in a local church for several months and took the congregation from a place of herding cats to a place of clarity. He is a good, wise leader who understands well organizational dynamics and a good person of wisdom in working with people.”

Many thanks to all who have been part of this three-year journey, including the last three years of Session members, Pastor Judy Wellington, and Pastor Mary Saylor. Particular thanks to the following:

Second Pastor Search Task Force -

Ann Bernal (Chair), Gaill Blackburn (Co-Chair), Carole Blake, Ginny Goodbar, Hoyte Mitchell, Greg Smith, Cheryl Williams

First Pastor Search Task Force -

John Paterson (Chair), Ann Bernal, Gaill Blackburn, Carole Blake, David Burel, Hoyte Mitchell, Cheryl Williams

Original Pastor Nominating Committee -

Roy Martin (Chair), Barb Atchison, David Burel, Ken Hassen, Dave Peterson, Mary Ann Wilkie, Barb Zubler

GPC is truly blessed that God has brought Pastor George to our doorstep. Please be sure to attend George’s first Sunday service at GPC on May 1st, as well as the celebratory luncheon afterwards.

Most sincerely,

GPC’s Pastor Search Task Force, 2022

Hello Gilbert Presbyterian Church!

My name is George Prohaska, and I am humbled to be called to serve as your pastor. I am a soon-to-be commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) in the PC(USA). I completed formal ministerial training in December 2021, through the Christian Leadership Program at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. I was ordained as a Ruling Elder in 1991 and served several terms, with several committees, on the Session at Mission del Sol church. Since 2015 I have been engaged in the mission and ministry of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

I am originally from Pittsburgh, PA, but the story starts to get interesting when my family moved to a small town in eastern PA. That is where I met my wife, Jayne.

We attended high school together and in 1979 we both graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, Jayne in Nursing and me in Chemistry. We married in December that year. From there we were off to Minneapolis for five years while I attended graduate school (U of MN, PhD, Chemistry) and then five years in the Cleveland area for my first “real job.” A job transfer brought us to Arizona in 1989 and the desert has been our family home ever since. Speaking of family, we have two adult children, Nick and Katie, who live in the area with their spouses and our four grand-girls.

Here in Arizona, Jayne worked as a NICU nurse and I managed manufacturing operations, serving high-tech customers in the semiconductor equipment, aerospace and defense industries. With grand-girl #4 on the way, Jayne retired in 2017 so she could help with child care. I left full-time employment in November 2019 (the “R-word” doesn’t fit) and began course work in CRE training in 2020.

We love to spend time at the beach, cook, hang out with family, and volunteer at St. Mary’s Food Bank. I am an avid reader; my “man cave” is a library. I always welcome recommendations for good novels. I go for a walk every day and would welcome company anytime. I love music, with a broad range of interest spanning classical and early choral music to classic rock. I continue to struggle to learn to play the guitar, but to paraphrase the character from Ted Lasso, “*Music is Life!*”

Thank you for inviting me to join the mission and ministry at Gilbert Presbyterian Church. I can hardly wait for the adventure to begin!



George W. Prohaska

HISTORY of SERVICE to the CHURCH

Member of Mission del Sol Presbyterian Church, Tempe, AZ since March, 1990.

Service at Mission del Sol:

- Ordained as Ruling Elder in 1991.
- Multiple terms as active Session member. Commission assignments included Finance, Christian Education, Worship and Personnel.
- Clerk of Session 1998 - 2000, 2011 – 2015. Both terms through interim ministries.
- Pastoral Nominating Committee member 2011 - 2013
- Currently a member of the Social Justice commission.

Service to the Presbytery of Grand Canyon:

- Resources Committee 2015 – 2016
- Leadership Commission 2016 – 2017
- Moderator of Presbytery 2017
- Commission on Ministry 2018 – present
- Administrative Commissions for the dismissal of five churches: Alpine, Springerville, Scottsdale (moderator), Fountain Hills (moderator), and Valley (active commission; moderator)
- Completing requirements to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

Education:

- B.S. Chemistry, University of Pittsburgh, 1979
- Ph.D. Chemistry, University of Minnesota, 1984
- Commissioned Lay Pastor / Commissioned Ruling Elder training: University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, 8-course curriculum completed December 2021.

Personal:

Married to Jayne Prohaska for 42 years; two grown children and four grandchildren. Living in the Ahwatukee Foothills area of Phoenix.



What Is a CRE in FAQ Format

- ***What is a CRE?***

CRE is an acronym for Ruling Elders who have been commissioned to particular service by the Presbytery. The Presbytery and Session shall agree on the mission and terms for commissioning. See the Book of Order, G-2.10.

- ***Is a CRE a minister?***

In the Reformed Tradition we are all called to serve as ministers.

- ***OK, then is a CRE a “Reverend?”***

Reverend is a title reserved for Ministers of Word and Sacrament (MWS), formerly Teaching Elders, who have graduated from an accredited seminary with a Master of Divinity degree. So, no, CREs do not hold the title “Reverend.”

- ***How are CREs trained?***

CRE training requirements are set by the Presbytery. In the Presbytery of Grand Canyon, candidates for CRE must have documented training in the Old and New Testaments, Preaching, Reformed Theology, Presbyterian Polity, Reformed Worship and Sacraments, Christian Education, and Pastoral Care. They are also required to take healthy boundaries training and sit for a professional psychological evaluation.

- ***How was George trained?***

George was trained through the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary’s Christian Leadership program, which offers eight semester-long courses in the areas of ministry noted above. George completed that course sequence in December 2021.

- ***How is the Presbytery involved in CRE training?***

A CRE candidate first applies, and if the way be clear, is accepted under care of the Presbytery’s Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). A liaison from CPM is assigned and the candidate meets at least annually with CPM while the candidate continues with instruction. Eventually CPM may find the candidate ready for examination by the Presbytery’s Commission on Ministry (COM). COM then examines the candidate and, if the results are satisfactory, certifies the candidate as ready for commissioning.

- ***How is a CRE commissioned?***

When the CRE, Presbytery, and a Session agree on terms of service, then the Presbytery will commission the CRE at a meeting of the Presbytery, using the constitutional questions for ordination. (George will be commissioned at the April 30, 2022 meeting of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.)

- ***What can a CRE do?***

A CRE can be commissioned by a presbytery to perform all of the duties usually assigned to a MWS as pastor: preach, teach, administer the Sacraments, moderate Session and congregational meetings, preside at weddings and funerals, etc.

- ***Why didn't the congregation vote on calling George?***

A CRE is considered a temporary pastor under our form of government. As such, a CRE is contracted by the Session for a definite time period, and not called by the congregation for an indefinite term.

- ***What do you mean temporary? Will we be looking for a pastor again in a year or two?***

CREs are commissioned for a maximum three-year period. But, CREs can be re-commissioned again and again without term limits.

- ***How common is it for a church like ours to have a CRE as pastor?***

For quite some time, there have been more open pulpits in the PC(USA) than pastors available to fill those pulpits. CREs have become much more common nationally as well as in the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.