



**INTRODUCING
JEFFREY E. BRYAN**



CANDIDATE SUNDAY JANUARY 20, 2008

9:30 AM

BIOGRAPHY

I was raised in the mountains of north Georgia near a small, country town called Rising Fawn. Our county – Dade County – is one of the least populated, least wealthy, and most geographically secluded in the state. Rising Fawn, GA, has no traffic lights, one post office, and five churches. I was baptized in the big Baptist church at age 12. Both my parents were educators in the Dade County school system, my mom a teacher and my dad the high-school principal. I was the classic overachiever: sports, clubs, theatre, music, volunteering, straight A's, and much more.

My college career began at Georgia Tech, where I drifted through several majors. On January 12, 1998, the first week of the winter quarter my sophomore year, my mother died after a five-year bout with cancer. Devastated and needing a break, I spent my last quarter at Tech as a co-op intern at an engineering firm in Charleston, SC. After seeing what it really means to be an engineer, I transferred to Berry College, a small, private, liberal arts school near Rome, GA. Determined and convinced of God's will for me to attend Berry, I paid my own way by working part time, playing rock and roll shows, and living on meager rations. Several professors at Berry were influential in developing my love for religious studies, philosophy, and ethics. They were mentors, spiritual guides, and good friends. I graduated in December of 2000 with a BS in Mathematics and three credits shy of a degree in Religious Studies.

After graduation I took a semester off, worked in Berry College's library, audited classes, and acted in two of Berry's theatre productions. I took an additional month to solo backpack around Europe, working odd jobs in Scotland for spending money. Upon return to the US and intending to become a professor, I began studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. Princeton was a total whirlwind. There I became acquainted with God's grace, became a Presbyterian, became assured of Christ's call to congregational ministry, served two Presbyterian congregations and three youth groups in two years, went through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in Portland, Maine, played in two rock bands and a bluegrass group, sang in the seminary Gospel Choir, organized and captained three intramural teams, and met, dated, and married my wife. I loved seminary.

I became the Director of Campus Ministries at First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor in August of 2004. Campus Ministry has been a wonderful, often challenging adventure. My work has covered a wide variety of areas, from preaching, teaching, and pastoral care to fundraising, visioning, and committee development. I have worked with a large staff as well as on my own. I have helped a 2,100-member congregation go through monumental change, and also counseled students on how to ask someone out on a date. It has been fun, to say the least. And, now I feel God calling me to new challenges. I see my gifts matching the world's needs in a congregational, multi-generational, community context of ministry. This is my passion, my calling: to be the pastor of a congregation.

The Lord has brought me a long way. From north Georgia, to New Jersey, to Michigan, and to many strange places in between. God has called me to ministry over a long period, and the journey has been quite bumpy at times. I have seen my mother die, my dad remarry, and my family shift and change. I have even begun a family of my own. I am glad to be on this journey, and I look forward to what the Lord has in store. God continues to open my eyes to the grace of Jesus Christ. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.



STATEMENT OF FAITH

When asked to make a statement of faith, I recite the Apostles' Creed. This Creed is a great comfort to me, especially given my faith history. The following statement is based on this Creed, referenced in italics.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. Every inch of planet earth belongs to the God of Abraham, who is radically, intimately close and also radically, transcendent and wholly different from us. God has spoken through Matriarchs, Patriarchs, and prophets, and God's message of grace continues.

I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord. I believe the Lord is sufficiently revealed in Jesus of Nazareth, Israel's Messiah, the Word of God incarnate. This Jesus was and is fully God and fully human. He died a criminal's death on a Roman cross, was buried in a borrowed grave, *descended into hell*, and rose from the grave a victory over sin and death. It inspires my faith to know that what God requires of us, God provides in the saving work of God's self, Jesus. "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter given to us by Christ and God the Father. This Holy Spirit calls us from our state of sin and death, our total depravity, to grace and salvation. The Holy Spirit binds us together as the Church, claims us when we are baptized, renews our wills so that we might follow Christ, and calls us to service and mission. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Old and New Testaments, our Scriptures, bear unique and authoritative witness to the triune God. I believe they are the witness without parallel, the Word of God written. The Word of God is proclaimed to God's church when these Scriptures are read and preached in dependence on the Holy Spirit. God is one, and this one God has been revealed in three persons: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – God the great I AM, Christ, and Paraclete. They are to be distinguished from each other, and they cannot be separated.

I believe in the holy catholic Church, Christ's body on earth, the community of Christ's faithful, the gathering of the elect. Jesus calls the Church into being, gives her faith and life, and will return for her in the fullness of time like a bridegroom for his bride. The true church may be found wherever the Word of God is rightly preached and the sacraments are rightly administered. There are only two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In Baptism God seals us in redemption, we are publicly received into Christ's family the Church, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit is marked. In the Supper we celebrate God's reconciliation of the world, *we commune with the saints* of all ages, and we receive from Christ the benefits of his death and resurrection. I think the great ends of the Church are indispensable guides: to proclaim the Gospel for the salvation of humankind, to shelter and nurture the children of God, to maintain divine worship, to preserve the truth, to promote social righteousness, and to exhibit Christ's Kingdom to the world.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins as achieved by the reconciling work of Jesus Christ on the cross and in the resurrection. *The dead will be raised* with spiritual bodies to judgment by Christ, and *everlasting life* awaits God's elect in the resurrection.

I believe God is a personal and caring God. You can set a place for God at the dinner table and expect God to show up. I see myself as an adopted child of the Lord, a baby really, growing in God's grace. It's good to be in God's family.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SPRINGFIELD, PA

The Pastoral Nominating Committee or PNC began their work in 2006 and reviewed the qualifications of nearly 300 potential pastors for our congregation. After listening to numerous sermons, and participating in several phone and face-to-face interviews with a number of qualified candidates, we are pleased to present Jeffrey E. Bryan as our candidate to be the next Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield.

Until now we had not identified that specific person that we felt God was calling to be our next pastor. When we met with Jeff Bryan in October of 2007, that situation changed. We had several conversations and a few visits with Jeff and his wife Kim, and we sensed that we had met a person with a clear passion for pastoring a community church and congregation like ours. Although our meetings with other candidates were typically very positive and they had many strong qualities, the sense of God's calling did not match up.

In our proceedings with Jeff Bryan, there was a different peace about the process and God's leading has been clear in all the details.. After getting to know Jeff, the PNC was unanimous in our desire to have him come as our pastoral candidate and Jeff has also felt God's leading to come to Springfield. We look forward to getting to know Jeff better from this Candidate Sunday January 20, 2008 forward.

Pastor Nominating Committee Members

Steve Arimoto
Anne Branton
Lynne Hartzell
Matthew Kellett
Dave McNulty
Doug Milana
Gretchen Miller
Sarah Palmer
Nanci Petroski