

**Report of the  
Mission Coordinator/Stated Clerk  
Search Committee**

Attached to this report you will find four (4) documents:

- Faith Statement
- Faith Journey
- Sense of Call
- Compensation Terms

The Search Committee is excited to recommend to you Rev. Dr. Joel Alvis as candidate for Cherokee Presbytery Mission Coordinator/Stated Clerk.

In taking this recommendation to the Coordinating Team, Search Committee member Elder Erma Jones wrote the following:

*It was a pleasure for me to serve as a member of the Search Committee for the Mission Coordinator. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to give my personal support and endorsement of the Reverend Dr. Joel Alvis.*

*As head of staff and interim pastorate, Reverend Alvis has a variety of excellent work experience that I know will be an asset to our presbytery.*

*He has impeccable qualifications, credentials in continuing education, participation in organizational and professional boards that accentuate his career. Yesterday, I discovered that he was a member of the Conference of Ghanaian Church of North America. This is just a glimpse of the varied examples of his participation in organizations and leadership positions beyond the church pastorate.*

*Additionally, I am impressed by his leadership style which will lend itself to effectively leading our presbytery's diverse composition, responsibility and programmatic function. If we choose a ministry action plan on stewardship as a goal for Cherokee, his experience would be beneficial for this objective.*

*Per his references, he works well with others, and leaves no stone unturned in completing a task. His standard of expertise and adherence to ethical guidelines are flawless.*

*If compensation is a challenge, I highly recommend that we try all options available to us to meet that challenge.*

*Based on all that I have reviewed regarding Reverend Dr. Alvis, it is without reservation that I full endorse him as our next Mission Coordinator.*

It is with a great deal of excitement that the Search Committee presents to you Rev. Dr. Joel Alvis as candidate for Cherokee's Mission Coordinator/Stated Clerk!

**Cherokee Presbytery**  
**P. O. Box 1839**  
**Cartersville, GA 30120-3548**

February 18, 2019

Reverend Joel Alvis, Jr., Ph.D.  
2473 Fontainebleau Drive  
Atlanta, GA 30360

RE: Cherokee Presbytery Stated Clerk/Mission Coordinator

Dear Reverend Alvis,

Thank you so much for submitting an application for the position of Cherokee Presbytery Stated Clerk/Mission Coordinator. Our committee thoroughly enjoyed reviewing your qualifications, talking with you on zoom and meeting you in person about our position. You met with The Coordinating Team and it was decided that you are the person who God is calling to lead us. Our committee and The Coordinating Team recognize your many wonderful accomplishments and experience, and it is with thankfulness and excitement that we offer our position to you under the following terms of call:

Salary:	\$ 37,000
Housing:	25,000
Travel Reimbursement	7,500
CPE & Other Expenses	3,200
Full Participation in the Board of Pensions	<u>22,940</u>
 Total Package	 \$ 95,640

We look forward to your leadership and your ministry with us and understand that your start date will be May 1, 2019. You have indicated that May 5-10, 2019 you will be attending Presbyterian Leadership Formation training in Malibu, California, with an orientation to that event February 25-27, 2019 in Louisville, KY.

God bless.

Rev. Greg Moore  
Chair, Cherokee Presbytery Stated Clerk/Mission Coordinator Search Committee

Statement of Faith: Joel L. Alvis, Jr.

*Jesus is Lord!* is a simple confession. It is an ancient creed that says what I have come to know, believe and trust as a follower of God in Jesus Christ.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims that I know the reality of God in three persons – the Trinity. The Word was, is, and will be the generative power of God to create, redeem and bless the world. Through the gift of our ancestors we know the persons of the Trinity as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims that God created the world from a void and breathed life into that creation. God created humankind. Despite rebellion against God, humankind is called by God into a special relationship through the children of Israel. From that relationship Jesus was born. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we are blessed to be restored in our relationship to God and seated at the table of the Lord's banquet.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims that through the Scriptures of the Bible known as the Old and New Testament we have a testimony to share in the world of the Word of God made flesh in Jesus Christ. This Word provides challenge and opportunity even as it also gives refreshment and encouragement.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims that the Church is the body of Christ. We find this community where there is the proclamation of the Word of God, sharing and receiving of the sacraments and a covenant community of Jesus' disciples.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims that if any one part of the church is blessed, all are blessed. If any one part of the church is hurt, all are hurt. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper nurture us to see and hear things that are not seen with our eyes and hear things that are not heard with our ears.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims that I confess having been sealed in baptism and living into a covenant of grace within the community of the Church where I join others in sharing the wholeness of God and seeking reconciliation in the Church and world.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims that I confess having been nourished with the fruits from grain and grape at the Lord's Table not due to any merit but by God's grace so that I may receive the spiritual nourishment all follower of Jesus need.

*Jesus is Lord!* proclaims hope that we are part of a cloud of witnesses that connects us not only with the past but extends into the future and by which we live in the present. The wonder of God's grace and faith is that we are offered to share a foretaste of those fruits by participating with others in living out the good news that Jesus is Lord!

*Jesus is Lord!* It is a simple confession. And it is sufficient.

Joel L. Alvis, Jr. -- Faith Journey

*Come Holy Spirit Heavenly Dove, With all Thy quickening power,  
Come, shed abroad a Savior's love, And that shall kindle ours.*

This fourth verse of an Isaac Watts hymn was the Prayer for Illumination used each week by the pastor of the congregation where I became a Presbyterian. The verse has remained with me for forty years.

Growing up in a Christian home, I saw faith lived out as my parents responded to God's call in a Baptist church. My father shared his medical arts on mission trips and in the community and my mother participated as a key volunteer of women's mission activities. But growing up in Mississippi in the 1960s I felt some disjuncture between the church world and the rest of the world. I now know God was a calling me to serve in the church from a young age. However, I did not want to be a Baptist preacher.

For a season I was an Episcopalian. There I asked a priest about seeking Holy Orders. He replied: "Joel do not go into ministry unless there is nothing else you can do." Some hear a rebuke in that comment. I did not. The Lord speaks to us often in the words of others. It was not my time.

I completed my Ph.D. in American History at Auburn University and began a career as an archivist at the Historical Foundation, now the Presbyterian Heritage Center, in Montreat, NC. But there was still a yearning to serve in some other way. Eventually with the direction of Vicki, my wife, and our pastor at the Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, I said yes to preparing for ordained ministry.

We spent the next three years at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. It was a privilege to participate in *The Presbyterian Presence Study Project* coordinated by Seminary faculty. As a result, I published an article about how different Presbyterian denominations lived with and contributed to racial tension. Later I published my Ph.D. dissertation, *Religion and Race: Southern Presbyterians, 1946-1983*.

My first opportunity to serve as Minister of Word and Sacrament came from St. Pauls, NC where I served for eight plus years. After five years as an associate pastor at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church in Dunwoody, GA, I entered a time of discernment for future ministry. One day my phone rang. It was an inquiry to be interviewed as an interim pastor. I said yes. Through that encounter I discovered the power of interim ministry. I learned that an interim is not a person, it is a process. What happens in the interim time is not all that different than what happens during an installed pastorate. What is different is the intensity and rapidity of these movements.

I have served eleven congregations as an interim pastor in the Presbyteries of Greater Atlanta, New Hope, Tampa Bay and Flint River. Through this calling and service, I have been a colleague in ministry by service on multiple committees in these Presbytery, including Committee for Preparation for Ministry, and a commissioner to the 2008 General Assembly. In different seasons, I taught Presbyterian History at Johnson C. Smith Seminary and was part of the faculty for the Interim Pastor Training at Calvin Center. In other places I have been a resource person for transitional matters and a member of an Administrative Commission.

Last fall a colleague that knew of the Cherokee Presbytery search suggested that I apply for the position of Mission Coordinator and Stated Clerk. I consulted those who knew my work. I prayed. And I applied. Throughout my ministry I have worked with presbytery leaders, both staff and volunteers. In each place I have sought to share the love of God through the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

As I come to Cherokee Presbytery, I pray that the quickening power of God's Spirit will use me in ways that are useful and good for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Sense of Call  
To the Ministry of Cherokee Presbytery as  
Mission Coordinator and Stated Clerk  
Joel L. Alvis, Jr., Ph.D.

In the fall of 2018, a colleague that knew of the Cherokee Presbytery search for Mission Coordinator and Stated Clerk suggested that I apply for the position. I consulted others with Presbytery leaders with whom I had worked, as well as church members and family. I prayed. And I contacted the Search Committee.

Three phrases that describe my ministry are:

- Developing relationships grounded in Christian faith,
- Identifying and utilizing resources found in the Church, and
- Sharing the joy and responsibility of Christian community.

The purpose of a presbytery is to be a place to provide connection and build support. Your mission structure highlights three functions:

- Cultivate leaders
- Support Congregations
- Facilitate Mission

These priorities resonate with my calling to build relationships, identify and connect resources and share community. I sense that your priorities and my skills may be blended together in a purposeful and useful ministry for the work of Jesus Christ through Cherokee Presbytery.

