

Biographical Sketch

John Witherspoon Johnson

Without a doubt, I am a Presbyterian. With the middle name of *Witherspoon*, did I have any other choice? I am proud of my heritage, and am grateful to my parents for instilling in me the values and ideals that I now hold dear.

I am a North Carolina native, and am the son of a Presbyterian minister and a Christian Educator. Growing up in small towns mostly in the piedmont area of North Carolina, my interests turned to music. The outstanding music program at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida interested me greatly, and I enrolled there following my high school years in Ashe County.



My desire at the time was to become a high school band director, but looking back I can see how God was already working with me – preparing me for a life of service in the church. Throughout my college years I spent my summers working at Camp Grier, and there truly learned to love God and God’s universe with an entirely new perspective.

After graduating from Stetson University I taught music in the public schools for one year. Then I answered a call to the ministry and enrolled at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond in the fall of 1977. My two years there were undoubtedly the best academic experiences of my life, and I graduated in 1979 excited about serving the church as an educator.

As an educator I served churches in Kinston, Greensboro, and Burlington, North Carolina, and Longwood, Florida. In the mid-90’s, answering another call from God, this time to the ordained ministry, I began the pursuit of my Master of Divinity degree, which I received from San Francisco Theological Seminary in 2000.

Ordained by Salem Presbytery in 2001, I have served as Stated Supply and Designated Pastor at Yanceyville and St. Paul, Greensboro respectively, Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian in Pompano Beach, Florida, Interim Pastorates at Shiloh in Burlington, and Wake Forest Presbyterian in Wake Forest, and Solo Pastor at Faith Presbyterian in Greensboro.

My interests in Christian Education have brought me much involvement with the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE), and I served on the Governing Cabinet for eight years, and served as President of APCE for 2006. One highlight of my service with APCE was traveling with a delegation to Korea and Taiwan in 2005 consulting with pastors and educators and Christian Education in these two countries. I have recently returned to service on the Governing Cabinet, serving as Coordinator for Technology and Social Media, and Webmaster.

The first 20 years of my ministry was spent with a focus on Youth Ministry, with many gratifying experiences to look back on. These include over 100 retreats with youth, 26 youth mission trips, and traveling over 100,000 miles with youth, and 18 Montreat Youth Conferences! I wouldn’t trade these experiences for anything.

Returning to Burlington in 1989 brought an added bonus as it was then that I met my wife Debbie and we married in 1992. She is a high school math teacher in Burlington. With my marriage to Debbie, I gained two lovely daughters; Jackie, who lives in Minneapolis and is counselor with the VA, and Stephanie who is a PhD candidate at UNC. Stephanie and her fiancé Will are to be married in October of 2013, and Jackie and her fiancé Phil will be married in early 2014. I also have two beloved sisters; one in Asheville, NC and the other retired from ministry with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), writing, preaching, and teaching in New Zealand.

I am an avid sports fan (Go Heels!) and I love to grill on my back patio. I enjoy photography and the creativity that computers allow. My “favorite place on earth” is Montreat. It is there that I am renewed and refreshed, and am reminded time and time again of what a privilege this life of service to the church is.