

THE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

is overjoyed to present

The Rev. Sarah Chancellor-Watson



as our candidate for

**Pastor at
First Presbyterian Church
of Richardson**

beginning February 23, 2026



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH *of*
RICHARDSON



About the Rev. Sarah Chancellor-Watson

Rev. Sarah Chancellor-Watson grew up near Tulsa, Oklahoma, where from an early age she experienced a sense of deep belonging within her nurturing community of faith at a small Presbyterian Church. It was there that she not only learned the traditions, central tenets, songs, and scripture of our faith, but also discovered her gifts for ministry. Growing up Presbyterian in the “Bible Belt” also provided Sarah with early experiences of wrestling with her faith, asking questions, and being led to a greater understanding of the radical inclusivity of God’s love, and the beauty found in the diversity of the Body of Christ.

Sarah earned her bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Oklahoma State University, and it was during her years in college that her call to ministry began to take shape. She took on leadership roles in the local church, on planning teams for Presbytery youth conferences, and as a staff member at a Presbyterian summer camp. Through the nurturing of these faith communities, Sarah embraced the call to serve God and others through the ministry of the Church.

Sarah earned two masters degrees in a dual degree program at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the University of Texas at Austin - a Master of Divinity and a Master of Social Work. Sarah has a desire to bring the best practices of social work into her ministry and mission of the church, and believes that along with the message of the Gospel, the church can be a positive force for change in individuals’ lives and in the community around them.

“Like a Mother Hen who gathers her chicks beneath her wings, God desires and is still at work in the world, gathering us as God’s children to heal this broken relationship.”

- Rev. Sarah Chancellor-Watson, *Statement of Faith*



Sarah is currently serving as Associate Pastor of Mission at St. Charles Ave. Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, where she has been for nine years. Along with the ministries of worship, preaching, and pastoral care, Sarah works alongside the congregation to connect the church with the larger community by engaging in mission partnerships with non-profit agencies addressing issues of homelessness, affordable housing, human trafficking, food insecurity, literacy and education. Sarah has seen how enriching the work of mission can be for the church when it is engaged in relational partnerships that connects us to not only our neighbors across the street, but to our neighbors all over the world.



Sarah is married to David Watson, a McKinney, Texas native. Sarah and David met while attending Austin Seminary. David is also a Presbyterian minister who has served a local church and has served as a chaplain for the New Orleans police department. Together they love cooking, going on walks in the park, and Broadway shows. Most of Sarah and David's time, however, is spent parenting two boys - Chance (5) and Sam (2). Chance loves legos and all things superheroes and Sam loves bananas and Disney Pixar's Cars. As a family they love going to the beach, the zoo and children's museum, watching movies together, and baking cookies. When Sarah does get a minute to herself, she works on her many unfinished crochet, cross stitch, and sewing projects.



Sarah describes herself as "a beloved child of God, claimed in the waters of baptism by the power of the Holy Spirit, and called to follow Christ. Everything about who I am and who I am called to be radiates from this core identity."

PNC Process

A brief look backward at your PNC's journey since we were elected in January 2024: We began by gathering information for our Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP), the document that would introduce FPC and our available position to potential candidates on the PCUSA's job-matching website. Once the Mission Study was finalized in June 2024, we incorporated the congregation's vision as expressed in the Mission Study into the final version of our MDP. Finally, in August 2024 we were ready to begin reviewing candidates. The PCUSA's matching system doesn't initially provide the candidate's identity to us, so in the beginning it's a blind review.

We digested the candidates' responses to 5 standard required questions; in addition to the content of their responses we noted how well they expressed themselves. We reviewed their education, training, continuing education, work experience, and connection/service to the larger church. Sometimes we could determine the candidate's identity based on checking the website of their current church, which often gave us other elements to evaluate: sermons, worship services, demeanor in worship, even the quality of the church's website (an important communication tool) got the once-over. In total, we reviewed 109 candidates. Through it all, we engaged in prayerful and careful discernment about which candidate to recommend. Sarah stood out right away, as we hope you'll agree!

"Sarah is a strong and mission-centered pastor. Whenever I talk with her about what is going on in her ministry and in the ministry of the church she is serving, she bubbles with enthusiasm over the latest outreach opportunity or an upcoming mission in the life of the church. Sarah appreciates that mission is a central expression of the church's worship and witness. Prepare to be invited, engaged, and transformed!"

- Rev. Meghan Vail, Community Presbyterian Church, Pinehurst, North Carolina



PNC Answers “Why Sarah?”

Margaret Rogers

A statement from Sarah's application caught my attention right away:

My “job” as a pastor is not to do ministry on behalf of the congregation, but to be a co-laborer in the work that we have been called by God to do together. I value a community who is already at work, reaching out in love to care for one another and the greater community and world outside the church. I desire to come alongside the work in progress, helping to guide and lead, to invite new people to join in, and to dream and discern where it is the Spirit is leading next.

I was drawn to learn more about someone that sounded so in sync with FPCR's hope for the “ministry of every member”. Once we began our conversations with Sarah, she emerged as someone who already “gets us” even before meeting the congregation. I am excited to see what we will create together as we strive to serve God in this place.

Rick Rickman

Sarah's commitment to mission and outreach fits perfectly with us being a Matthew 25 church and that will help us explore new areas for service to Christ. As do we, she believes that we are all a priesthood of believers and are co-laborers in the work of the church. We will rejoice in doing things together to bring glory and honor to God. Technology has allowed us to view her leading a number of services as an associate pastor and delivering meaningful and relatable sermons that are solidly grounded in Scripture, thought-provoking and connected to contemporary issues we face. When you have a chance to visit with her, you will experience what we did in getting to know her in the search process. She is a warm, caring, genuine person who will engage with you and will be an effective pastor to all age groups in our church. It has been a time of patience in the church, and we thank you for that patience and your prayers. The Holy Spirit has led us to Sarah, and we believe that she is the right person at the right time for First Presbyterian Church of Richardson.

“Sarah has been an incredible Associate Pastor at our church, St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian. I have had the opportunity to know Sarah in several different scenarios, first as a new member and later, on the Session. I was impressed by Sarah's leadership, her deep theological and institutional knowledge, as well as her grace in handling the various issues that came before the Session. Most recently, I served as the Young Adult and Family coordinator and had the opportunity to work with Sarah on staff. As I learned more about the inner workings of our church, I was impressed to see all the different ways Sarah serves our church as Associate Pastor and how well she juggles all of these responsibilities. Sarah is very busy, yet I never saw her complain or lose her signature sunny disposition. We will miss Sarah deeply at St. Charles Avenue, but I have no doubt she will be a wonderful leader in her next church home.” - Tyler Wheeler, member of Sarah's church and former colleague

Julie Houpt

Sarah stood out to me from our very first interaction with her because of her impressive experience and background. As we learned more about her and got to know her more personally, I have been struck by how well she fits our church family. She is a good fit in the big, important ways - such as her strong faith, leadership skills, creativity, solid theology, love for children, and collaborative approach to ministry. But I've learned she is also a good fit in the smaller ways that confirmed this decision and made it such a joyful one, like God was nudging me to embrace her - such as her background in music, love for this area of the country, and her appreciation for the beauty of our sanctuary. This PNC process has been an emotional one, but every interaction with Sarah has been uplifting and hopeful. I could not be more confident in this decision, or more excited to welcome her and her family into our church.



Ben Niewenhuis

After almost a year of active PNC searching, Sarah immediately stood out as a candidate. Her clear writing voice communicated a warm personality and a rich theology that resonated with my experience here at FPCR. This first impression was only confirmed and deepened as we repeatedly met with Sarah, both online and in-person, and began to envision what a future together might look like. In Sarah I recognize a person raised by a vibrant church community, who heard the call to church leadership, and who has pursued that call joyfully and whole-heartedly ever since. I believe the Holy Spirit has now called Sarah to us through this process, and I am excited to see what we will accomplish together here at First Presbyterian Church of Richardson.

“I believe that our purpose is to give God glory in everything we do, and to revel in the beauty of creation, constantly give thanks for all the gifts that we have been freely given through the way we live our lives as disciples of Christ.”

- Rev. Sarah Chancellor-Watson, Statement of Faith

A Letter from Sarah



Dear Soon-to-be Friends at First Presbyterian Church Richardson,

About six months ago, while attending the Mo Ranch Women's Conference, I confided to my cousin, Rev. Rebecca Sicks, that my husband and I were beginning to feel the pull of the Holy Spirit to leave New Orleans and begin to look for new opportunities to serve in the church. She then began to tell me about this amazing church in Richardson where she had served. She told me that the people were great and that they were a church that was ready "to do more."

Hello! Holy Spirit! *tug, tug*

I admittedly was a little hesitant to pay attention to this tug at first, because I loved the work I was doing and the community we had formed in New Orleans, but there was something about FPCR that made me look closer and open myself up to the possibilities the Spirit was leading me to. From almost my first meeting with your PNC, getting to know them and you all through them, I knew that I had been led to a truly special community. In the intervening months I have learned that you are a church who has done some difficult work. You are not afraid to look at your past, to learn some hard lessons, and take steps to create a healthy, more sustainable future. You are a church who does not shy away from tough conversations and wrestles with the deep things of our faith and the challenges in our world - like racism, the inclusion of our LGBTQ+ siblings, environmental justice, and all the things that can be divisive and tear us apart. You are a church that takes seriously its call to love one another and take care of one another, nurturing people of all ages and valuing the gifts each person brings. You are a church who desires to answer Christ's call to serve him in the least, the lost, and the left out, and are creating a place of hospitality and hope in your neighborhood.

I am honored and filled with joy at being called to be your next pastor. I know my whole family will be embraced by you all, and I'm excitedly awaiting the first Sunday when my children will join yours on the steps of the chancel for the Time for Tiny Theologians. They already love running up and down your sanctuary aisles. I am looking forward to our first "Sticky Breakfast" together and sharing fellowship over a plate of pancakes. I can't wait to serve with you, to be your co-laborer in God's vineyard as together we continue to create a place at FPC where all belong, where all are nurtured in the love of God, and all find purpose and calling in serving God and neighbor.



In Christ,
Sarah Chancellor-Watson

"One of the theological tenants of our reformed faith that I value greatly is the 'priesthood of all believers.' This idea that each of us is called to the ministry of Christ in the world, is one that I think is reflected beautifully in our polity and the parity between clergy and lay leaders."

- Sarah Chancellor-Watson, PDP



"Sarah is an exceptional pastor. She has the most important attribute for ministry: a kind and compassionate heart. Her sermons are clear and they connect well with the needs of her people. It was a privilege and an honor to serve with her for over two years at Saint Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church in New Orleans while I was their interim senior pastor and head of staff. Your congregation will be blessed beyond measure by her presence, her intelligence and her dedication."

- Michael Jinkins, President Emeritus of Louisville Theological Seminary, HR.

A Special Note of Thanks to Frank

As we bring Sarah Chancellor-Watson to you to embrace as our new pastor, the PNC pauses to say a heart-felt “thank you” to Frank Camp, our initial chair. While he has been sidelined lately by illness, it was Frank, with his focused leadership and extraordinary organizational skills, who got the PNC up and running. Especially important was his leadership through the tedious—but critical—process of preparing the Ministry Discernment Profile, which describes for potential candidates our church’s mission, vision and values. Just as important was his guidance in preparing what was necessary to file with PCUSA’s Church Leadership Connection to officially state that we were ready to consider and interview candidates. It was Frank who had first contact with Sarah when she emailed him of her interest in us. Interestingly, Frank attended Sarah’s current church while he was in college at Tulane. Despite his illness, Frank has stayed engaged electronically with the PNC and the steps it has taken to arrive at this special moment. We thank him for his leadership in helping the PNC discern God’s will for this church, and we ask God’s continued blessings on him with his recovery.

In Gratitude from your fellow PNC members,
Margaret Rogers, Ben Niewenhuis, Julie Hought, Rick Rickman

Congregational Meeting Agenda

Sunday, November 16, 2025

Convening Prayer and Call to Order	Pastor Alice Hernandez, Moderator
Declaration of a Quorum and Statement of Meeting Purpose	Laura Owens, Clerk of Session
Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) Report	Margaret Rogers, Acting PNC Chair Julie Hout, Ben Niewenhuis
Questions from the Congregation	Pastor Nominating Committee
Motion to Call the Candidate	Pastor Alice Hernandez
Congregational Vote to Approve the Candidate	Laura Owens
Announcement of the Vote	Pastor Alice Hernandez
Prayer and Adjournment	Pastor Alice Hernandez