



**SWARTHMORE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Position Description**

**Title:** Supply Associate Pastor for Christian Formation

**Type of Position:** Full-time

Christian formation is a lifelong spiritual journey. Swarthmore Presbyterian Church (SPC) is a multi-generational congregation that has since its inception placed special emphasis on spiritual formation at every stage of life, from infancy through adulthood. The Associate Pastor for Christian Formation is responsible for managing and growing engagement in our Christian Formation ministry, which spans Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult Education, and Volunteer Ministry.

Given that faithful discipleship takes place in every sphere of our lives, we believe that Christian formation should be multi-disciplinary across the arts and sciences as well as rooted in biblical and theological studies. It takes place in the classroom, the sanctuary, our homes, the outdoors, and the community. We strive to engage the whole person, in developmentally appropriate ways, through different modes of activity, such as play, service learning, study, reflection, conversation, artistry, music-making, and recreation. In our desire to become spiritually mature disciples of Christ in a religiously diverse world, we value questions as much as answers, and we believe that the church, when intentionally cultivated with values of hospitality, inclusion, respect, kindness, and safety, can be the community in which our faith can be formed with nurture and challenge. The ministry of Christian formation, therefore, attends as much to cultivating a sense of community as it does to the programs.

We seek a candidate who exhibits a mature Christian faith and a strong sense of call to build community in which each child of God can experience a sense of belonging. This person will have the heart of a pastor and the skills of a teacher in relating to persons of all ages. This person will have the desire and ability to work in a pastoral and collegial manner with the staff, Session, and congregation to the end that the body of Christ will be built up.

SPC is committed to raising up future generations of faithful disciples. According to the results of the US Congregational Survey, one of SPC's most important values relative to other congregations is in "caring for young people," where we ranked in the 79<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally

as compared with the 16<sup>th</sup> percentile for Presbyterian churches. Over the past 12 years, our Youth Ministry has grown into a nationally recognized program.

And there is fertile ground for this ministry, both within SPC and the larger community around SPC. SPC currently has 155 infants, children, and youth in our congregation – 120 of whom are in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. We seek a minister who will, with imagination, energy, and strategy build upon our rich tradition and utilize the resources that SPC has committed to the Christian formation of our children and youth to grow our ministry in measurable ways.

**Qualifications:** Candidates may be ordained or lay persons. We seek theologically trained candidates who have a Master of Divinity or a master's degree in Christian Education or in Theological Studies from an accredited institution. Although candidates may have different denominational backgrounds, candidates must be knowledgeable in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, Presbyterian polity, and Worship and Sacraments, consistent with Presbyterian polity and tradition, in addition to the subject matters of human growth and development and religious education theory and practice. We seek candidates who have relevant professional or volunteer experience. Candidates must be highly organized and responsible.

**Accountability:** The Associate Pastor for Christian Formation is directly responsible to the Pastor/Head of Staff and will work closely with the Session and other staff members.

**Responsibilities:** The Associate Pastor for Christian Formation is responsible for the program area of Christian Formation, ensuring effective administration, management, and communication of Christian Formation programs. In collaboration with the staff, Session committees, and program volunteers, the Associate Pastor for Christian Formation is expected to develop, plan, and, with teams of lay leaders, lead the Christian Formation programs of the church in accordance with the safety policies set by the Session.

The Associate Pastor for Christian Formation is expected to develop the benchmarks, curricula, and programs for Christian Formation that are informed by current research and best practices in Christian education and service learning and by the developmental stages of children, adolescents, young adults, and older adults.

In addition, the Associate Pastor is expected to assist in worship leadership, preaching, counseling, and pastoral care, and other duties that may be assigned from time to time. Specific duties are as follows:

❖ *Children's and Youth Ministry*

- Serve as pastor to the children, youth, and their families.
- Awaken the desire and strengthen the capabilities of young people to serve God and our community.

- Establish regular communication with youth and families, effectively utilizing current technologies.
- Develop, implement, and grow a Sunday School program for the children (birth through 7<sup>th</sup> grade) of the church.
- Plan, teach, and lead the confirmation program. Recruit and resource the confirmation teaching team.
- Guide and support the Children's and Youth Ministry Committee.
- Oversee the Children's and Youth Ministry budgets, in consultation with the Children's and Youth Ministry Committee and the Business Office.
- Recruit and train volunteer leaders of programs.
- Develop Christian leadership among youth and identify opportunities for them to share their spiritual gifts within the life of church, the larger denomination, and the interfaith community.
- Plan and lead children's and youth programs, including weekly Middle School Youth Group, regular events for high-schoolers, service-learning opportunities, and interfaith programs.
- Develop and lead children's and youth summer programs, including Vacation Bible School, youth mission trips, and youth conferences.
- Serve as staff liaison to the Swarthmore Presbyterian Nursery Day School Advisory Committee, facilitating a collaborative and mutually enriching relationship between the church and the nursery day school.
- Maintain relationships with SPC youth after high school graduation as they transition into young adulthood. Encourage them to engage in congregations and ecumenical and interfaith ministries beyond SPC.

#### ❖ *College Ministry*

- Provide ministry to college students in collaboration with Protestant Chaplain and the Interfaith Center at Swarthmore College and Partners in Ministry.
- Engage college students and young adults in the ministries of SPC, including volunteer, youth, and children's ministries.

#### ❖ *Adult Education*

- Support and guide the Adult Education Committee in its work to provide weekly Sunday programs and special programs, such as the Theologian-in-Residence.
- Support the Adult Education Committee to develop programs that further promote the missional direction of SPC, by engaging with local entities like Partners in Ministry, the Interfaith Council of Southern Delaware County, and Swarthmore College.
- Oversee the Adult Education budget, in consultation with Adult Education Committee.
- Serve as a teacher of adult education classes, when appropriate and available.

- Integrate intentional reflection on praxis of service into Christian Formation.

❖ *Worship Leadership*

- Prepare and lead worship on a regular basis.
- Prepare and work with the youth to lead worship

❖ *Service to the Larger Church*

- Participate in the life of the larger church.
- Engage in interfaith relationships and collaborations.