

The Pastor Nominating Committee Joyfully Presents

Samantha Lynn Evans

Candidate for Pastor of Stone Church of Willow Glen



Sammie Evans is currently the Pastor and Manager of Faith & Worship at Broad Street Ministry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is responsible for all aspects of worship, as well as providing pastoral care, supervising a pastoral fellow, fundraising, and convening the "Congregational Braintrust" (their session).

Join us for an informal reception to meet Sammie and her partner Iyesha

When: Saturday, December 2, 2017

Where: Stone Church of Willow Glen
Social Hall

Time: 3pm-5pm

Education

- ▶ M. Div.; Princeton Theological Seminary - 2014
- ▶ BS Physics (Biological Systems); Allegheny College - 2011

Experience

- ▶ 2016-Present - Pastor, Broad Street Ministry, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ▶ 2014-2016 - Pastoral Fellow, Broad Street Ministry, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ▶ 2012-2013 - Pastoral Intern, First Presbyterian Church, Matawan, New Jersey

Candidating Service

Sunday, December 3, 2017, 9:30am.
Congregational meeting to follow worship.

The PNC on Rev. Evans

“Sammie is an insightful, wise, and thoughtful person who has an incredible gift for perceiving where you’re at, seeing where you need to go, and leading you gently to realize it yourself. Her concerns are our concerns, and I can’t imagine anyone I’d rather have leading Stone Church.”

—*Julia Roberts*

“There are so many reasons I’m thrilled Sammie is coming to Stone. Here’s one that stands out for me: she listens with the intent to hear and learn. In our phone interviews, and our face-to-face conversations, formal and informal, no matter the topic we were covering, Sammie *listened*. Her responses were thoughtful, compassionate, and often helped us notice something in the topic we hadn’t thought of previously.”

—*Janice Goertz*

“Sammie Evans is a bright, introspective, thoughtful individual, many years in advance of her age. Her sermons are consistently inspirational and based on scripture. Her process for sermon preparation is thorough and specific. She is outstanding at building relationships with all ages. She tends to be unflappable when presented with a new challenge, consistently looking for the underlying elements affecting each challenge. And, Sammie has a delightful sense of humor!”

—*Bob Lowry*

“Sammie is a radically welcoming, warm, and caring person. This is exhibited both in personal interactions with her, and in her preaching and worship leadership. Her sermons are deeply rooted in scripture, and are comforting, uplifting, *and* challenging. I am elated that the Spirit has drawn us together for the future of Stone Church.”

—*Nicholas Hurley*

“It is rare to find someone with such a wealth of understanding. I can’t wait for Sammie to take her place in our church community.”

—*Caryl Westerberg*

About Rev. Evans

In our time with Rev. Evans, the PNC has noticed her visionary gifts, specifically a strategic vision filled with hope and possibilities. She has a self-awareness that many of us still aspire to, is supremely organized, and has an extensive network of connections that she does not hesitate to call upon. Above all, we have found her to be radiant, welcoming, and an engaging, inspiring preacher.

Her current congregation, Broad Street Ministry in Philadelphia, PA is a unique mix of Presbyterian congregation and community service center. It was founded in 2005 as a “church plant” before the name became widely used, before the PC(USA) started its 1001 New Worshipping Communities initiative. Broad Street Ministry is a place where (according to their website) “the possessor of a PhD in theology prays alongside a summa cum laude graduate of the School of Hard Knocks”.

In her ministry, Rev. Evans has been the primary fund raiser of her congregation’s budget, designed and directed a Garden Initiative, taught food justice classes, led youth programs, executed a 3 week trip for service seeking young adults, provided direct care to homeless and other vulnerable populations, supported art as a complement to worship service, taught Sunday school, developed one on one relationships with members of all ages, and initiated a mentoring cohort within her large Presbytery.

Rev. Evans In Her Own Words

When I first had an inclination that God was calling me to ministry, I was a junior at Allegheny College in Meadville, PA, pursuing a degree in physics. I was spending a semester abroad in Tübingen, Germany. I had been struggling to convey myself to those I met. I did not know how to tell or show people who I was because they had no idea where I came from and how I became the person I was. In the midst of this struggle, I was praying a lot, and I soon realized that this was so difficult for me because I did not know who I was myself. I experienced my first real existential crisis and I turned to God for help. It was in the midst of this that I felt God calling me to ministry. As many people do, I ignored it. When I returned to the States, entering my senior year, I had to make some decisions. My senior year of college was a whirlwind and I went from applying to physics PhD

programs, to receiving an acceptance letter from Princeton Theological Seminary, to being placed in Denver, Colorado for a Young Adult Volunteers service year, to finally taking a huge leap and deciding to go to Seminary. I figured I would just go and if it wasn't right, I could always go back to physics.

The last several years have been an exciting time of discernment. The opportunities I have been given to study, reflect, and work have enriched my understanding of the church as well as my own call to ministry. I have focused my time and energy on ministry that is focused on building relationships, growing in faith, and walking alongside congregants and colleagues as we dedicate ourselves to being disciples of Christ who meaningfully and lovingly serve God, one another, our community, and the world.

The Book of Order asserts that the church is the body of Christ (F-1.0301). My entire worldview rests on the notion that the body of Christ is made up of many members, and each discrete part of that body is incomplete and ineffective when it attempts to stand alone. When any member of the body of Christ is suffering and unable to be who Christ calls her or him to be, the entire body suffers. I feel called to a ministry that works for all members of the body of Christ to experience healing and reconciliation, to be supported to grow and change, and to fulfill her or his calling in the body of Christ.

God has been calling me to the church ever since I was nine years old, when, for reasons I cannot remember, I pleaded with my mom to take me to church. It is so exciting to walk, run, and crawl along this journey to self-discovery and discovery of what God is doing in the world.

Rev. Evans' Statement of Faith

I believe in the Almighty God of the universe, who formed the heavens and the earth, and gives life to all creatures.

Scripture reveals to us that God is a triune God. It is through the three persons of the trinity that we come to know who our God is.

God the Father spoke the universe into existence. This is the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Sarah, and Rebekah, Leah and Rachel.

I believe the fullness of God chose to dwell in Jesus Christ. It is through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ that salvation of the world occurs. Consistent with the text, Colossians 1:19-22, I believe God acted to redeem creation through the death of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ reveals God's power and will for the world. In raising Jesus from the dead, the life and work of Jesus is confirmed as being from God. This act reveals to the world Jesus' authority and God's plan to redeem all of creation back to God.

I believe the Holy Spirit sustains and empowers, and confirms the truth as revealed through Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures reveal to us the nature of God and the relationship between God and God's people. The Old Testament narratives reveal a God who delivers God's people from oppression and forgives them their transgressions. The prophetic literature gives us the word of the LORD, which calls for freedom from oppression for the poor. The gospel reveals that God is acting in the world to free all from oppression, forgive sins, and reconcile humanity back to God.

I believe it is in the death and resurrection of Christ that all are made righteous before God. One who professes faith in this extraordinary act receives grace and justification through faith.

The sacraments are assurances of this grace. In Baptism we are engrafted into the family of God. Even before we can profess faith in Christ, we are assured of God's power and grace. The Lord's Supper is a joyous feast that is a sign and seal of the grace of God. It is a time that believers are bound together in Christ, a time to remember one's baptism, and a time to celebrate the return of Christ.

I believe as Christians, we are called to be witnesses to the redeeming power and love of God. We are commissioned to make God's love, truth, and grace known to the world. We are the body of Christ, created to live a life of service to God and one another and to proclaim the kingdom of God until that joyous day when our Lord, Jesus Christ, returns.

Rev. Evans' Sense of Call

I envision a church that is dedicated to the work of the kingdom, not a church fighting to be relevant in the postmodern world. I envision a church that takes seriously the work of shepherding the people of God to become disciples, not a church that succumbs to trends that quickly fade. I envision a church that cares deeply about the people the world has forgotten because they are convinced that the body of Christ is incomplete when these people go unnoticed. I feel called to the church that proclaims that the kingdom of God has drawn near. The church that deeply believes that it needs all parts of the body to function and thrive in order to do the work of the kingdom. I feel called to a pastoral role that is focused on walking alongside people on their discipleship journey to find their purpose and become the person God created them to be. I am seeking a pastoral role that allows me to serve in a congregation that is working to find purpose and meaning so that together they may faithfully and lovingly serve God, one another, their community, and the world.

Terms of Call

Effective Salary \$97,500

Board of Pensions Based on salary (projected 38%)

Vacation 30 days/year + 1 Sunday/quarter

Study Leave 14 days/year

Professional Expenses \$2,000

Auto Allowance \$1,000

Continuing Education \$2,000

Members of the PNC

Fran Cole, Janice Goertz, Jim Hagan, Nicholas Hurley, Bob Lowry, Aaron McNelis, Alice McNelis, Jonathan Miller, Julia Roberts, Caryl Westerberg; Committee on Ministry Liaison Lizanne Reynolds

Dear Sisters, Brothers, and Siblings of Stone Church,

I write to you full of excitement and gratitude for the possibility that lies before us. I am thankful to God for being at work during this process. I am thankful for the faithful work of the PNC, who have taken this call very seriously. I am also thankful to all of you. The PNC has kept my identity confidential so that I may say goodbye to my current congregation as faithfully and pastorally as possible, but I also acknowledge that this kind of ambiguity and unknown can cause great anxiety, thus I am thankful for your patience and trust throughout this process.

This time of unknown will shift very soon when we are able to meet in person, worship, and discern together the movements of the Holy Spirit. In the meantime, your PNC is providing you with a lovely brochure and this letter, which will hopefully make our first meeting feel less like a blind date set up for us by our well-meaning grandmothers. The brochure contains much of my biographical information, thus I will try not to be too redundant here. To give you a more holistic picture of myself, I will tell you that I have a partner who reminds me who I am and enriches my experience of life every single day. I love reading, watching, and listening to stories. I am reluctantly learning to find joy in cooking. I have classically been a beer drinker but am learning to also enjoy wine. And I think every child, baby, and animal is the most beautiful, loveliest creature I have ever met.

Should the way be clear, we will have many opportunities to dream together, but I also thought you might like to know a little about my hopes for the ministry we might do together. First and foremost, I look forward to sharing our stories of how God is at work in our lives. Our tradition thrives on telling and retelling the story of reconciliation and life with God. We are called to add our own experiences, hoping and praying that this will draw us closer to God, one another, and who we have been created to be. I pray that you will entrust me with your stories as I entrust you with mine. Guided by a knowledge of one another's stories, I look forward to holding spaces where we are able to proclaim the beautiful diversity of the body of Christ and how it all fits together. We become a stronger body, one where all members find true belonging, when we are able to proclaim, celebrate, offer, and steward the diversity of gifts found in the body. Once we've come to know one another: through our stories, our gifts, and our shared sense of belonging, it is my hope and prayer that we will discern and develop a vision for how God is calling us to build the kingdom. This is the universal, ever-evolving calling of the church, and I hope to lead you through communal discernment for the particular calling of Stone Church.

I am overwhelmingly excited to be with you all in just a few short days. In the meantime, I ask for your prayers for traveling mercies for me and my partner, Iyesha. I ask for your prayers as I say goodbye to my current congregation. And I ask for your prayers as we continue to discern God's calling for us all.

Grace and peace,
Sammie