

## Updates From Your PNC

**Your PNC:** Debbie Bellovich and Dan Grano, Co-Chairs, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Cynthia Ford, Michael Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer.

**9/24/21** Finally, October 3 is almost here! What an exciting time this is for our congregation! Be on the lookout for a brochure about our candidate to arrive at your home around September 30. We know that many challenges and employee losses during the pandemic have made US Postal Service delivery dates much less predictable, but we are working hard to get this information to you on time. Rest assured that there will also be information sent out by email on that date.

We are asking for your care, patience and understanding as we traverse the challenges of introducing a candidate to you before the candidate's church learns of this call. It has been a long time since GPMC has called a pastor who was actively serving another congregation. Since then, the wide use of social media has made these transitions even more difficult to navigate. While we are filled with anticipation, hope and joy, we know that another congregation will be experiencing great sadness at the loss of a respected and loved pastor. **Out of care and concern for them, we ask that you do not share any information about our announcement, our meeting or our candidate on email, on any websites, or social media platforms until after our vote on October 3.** We want the candidate's church to learn from *them* of their decision.

Here are the final hints before you receive "the rest of the story..." Our candidate, already an experienced Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, is an expert bread maker, loves golf, and is excited for the long legacy of GPMC.

**9/16/21** On Sunday, September 12, our Co-chairs Debbie Bellovich and Dan Grano made an exciting announcement at all three services that, after months of interviews, prayer and discernment, the Pastor Nominating Committee has issued a call to a candidate for our Pastor/Head of Staff position, and that call has been accepted. To view the announcement, go to: <https://bit.ly/39aheF1>

How good it was to feel your joyful response! We rejoice as well, because our candidate, while in a very successful and positive ministry, felt God's call to join us at this important time. We're very eager to introduce this new person to you, so we ask that you please use the sign-up genius to register for either in-person worship on Sunday, Oct. 3 or the livestream if you will attend our congregational meeting via Zoom. If you need help doing this, please contact the church office. We're grateful for your patience and understanding as we navigate this new process for your safety.

Substantial information on the candidate will be forthcoming in the week preceding October 3. Out of care and concern for the candidate's church, we are asking that you do not share any information about our announcement, our meeting or our candidate on any websites or social media platforms until after our vote on October 3.

Here are some facts that you might enjoy knowing: Our candidate graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with an MDiv. and has earned a Doctor of Ministry degree. They have dreams of walking the Camino De Santiago pilgrimage in Spain someday. There you go, Lee Sanborn!

On May 10, The Rev. Sarah Godbehere said this in her sermon message: "We will always be connected to our older story but we look to the future with excitement to learn where God is leading us with a new word being revealed." How grateful we are for Pastor Sarah's leadership and the wise sermon messages from both of our ministers, Sarah and Susan Mozena, that have guided us through this time! They have focused on our future in such positive ways with grace and love. We continue to look to them with deep gratitude for their hope, inspiration, leadership and love.

**9/2/21** Our positive progress gives us great hope for the future of our church! We remain so grateful to the members of the Mission Study Team who worked diligently throughout 2020 to gather your opinions and desires for our next Pastor/ Head of Staff. Their report has been called, "...one of the best I've ever read" and cited by many candidates. It remains a basis for what we have worked toward in seeking a pastor who will inspire us to grow in our faith and our journey of discipleship. We owe much to the Mission Study Team members: Julie Huellmantel (chair), Didi DeBoer, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Dan Grano, and Suzanne Hoffmann for their dedication. Three of those members, Dan, Chelsea and Don agreed to extend their service by becoming a part of our PNC, allowing a smooth transition and progress in our search. Thanks be to God for all of your contributions and care for GPMC!

**8/26/21** As we continue faithfully in our process, we remain so grateful to those who worked on the Mission Study and the "History of our Story" Team (HOST) throughout 2020. Their work on your behalf provided us with excellent materials that gave candidates a full description of our congregation. How valuable it is to have the HOST video for many reasons! On Friday, August 21, members, friends and family of Jean Hodges gathered on Trinity Terrace to celebrate her 100 years and 83 days on this earth. We are so fortunate that Jean made a contribution to our HOST video, telling a story of a visit from Dr. Frank Fitt over 65 years ago! We invite you to re-visit our web site at: [gpmchurch.org/web/pastor-transition](http://gpmchurch.org/web/pastor-transition) to watch the video once again. Our sincere thanks to Michelle Deland, Tamara Gilbert, Sarah Godbehere, Jay Lady, Joe Masinick, Lois Palazzolo, Martha Speer and Chick VanDusen for their work on the HOST committee.

**8/19/21** Here are the answers to our PNC quiz from last week: Debbie Bellovich considered becoming a professional numismatist. If you're not sure what that is, or need to check the spelling on *anything*, ask Mike Kopasz, who is our national spelling bee champion! Don Ditmars, whose roots are in the East, loves to shuck and eat oysters, but was unsuccessful in convincing his granddaughters to enjoy them. Martha Speer played lacrosse in college, while Kathy Kurap loved playing field hockey. Cynthia Ford attended Woodstock, but had to walk a very long way just to get to the perimeter! Peter Marks hiked the Grand Canyon with his brother, Mike. Dan Grano won a track

and field award from GPSHS without being on the track team or even going to school there. And Chelsea Gilbert has met Katie Ledecky and held one of her Olympic gold medals! We've had fun learning about each other and rejoice in all of God's blessings and gifts.

**8/12/21** We're grateful for the positive comments we received last week for both our live update and our written one. Thank you! Some of you wanted to know the answers to our "Did you know...?" queries from the bulletin and email message, while another church member suggested we test your skills. So here we go, a multiple choice test with the answers to follow in a week:

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|---------------------|---|
| 1. Debbie Bellovich | a. National Spelling Bee Champion                 |
| 2. Don Ditmars      | b. Played lacrosse in college                     |
| 3. Chelsea Gilbert  | c. Hiked down, across and up the Grand Canyon     |
| 4. Dan Grano        | d. Varsity field hockey player in college         |
| 5. Cynthia Ford     | e. Considered a profession of a numismatist       |
| 6. Michael Kopasz   | f. Once met Katie Ledecky and held her gold medal |
| 7. Kathy Kurap      | g. Really good at shucking oysters                |
| 8. Peter Marks      | h. Attended Woodstock                             |
| 9. Martha Speer     | i. Won a track & field award from GPSHS           |

Now we'd better get back to work! There's much to do, with more pastor search updates to follow in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!

**8/8/21** We have often expressed what an honor it has been to be chosen and trusted by you to serve on the PNC. Do you realize what a diverse group of people you have on this committee? In our ten months together, we have learned a lot about each other! Can you guess which one of us won a national spelling bee championship? Who played lacrosse in college, and who played on their varsity field hockey team? Which one of us attended Woodstock? Who is really good at shucking oysters? Who won a track and field award from GP South in high school without being on the track team or even going to school there? Which one of us thought about becoming a professional numismatist? Did you know that one of us met Katie Ledecky and held one of her gold medals, while another tested their skills by hiking down into, across and up the Grand Canyon? Yes, we have a variety of skills and interesting stories that have lovingly knit us together. Most importantly, we share a common trust that God is gently and lovingly leading us to our next Pastor/Head of staff. We have met exceptional people along the way, and have great hope and enthusiasm for our future. Stay tuned and keep us in your daily prayers!

**7/8/21** Message from the PNC: It's interesting to note that each of the Senior Pastors in our 156-year history have brought different strengths to us with various models of leadership. They haven't looked alike, and they've ministered to us in a variety of different ways, yet from each personality we have continued to build on our firm foundation and grow in our faith and discipleship. Coming from such a positive ministry as Peter Henry gave us, we know that many of you have wanted us to "clone" him. Yet our PNC has known from the start that we cannot do that. Clones do not show up in pastor searches, and probably for good reason. In this process of discernment, God wants us to grow in new and positive ways, most certainly building on the strengths of our past, but always learning from new and different approaches. As we search, we keep in mind the positives that you are looking for in a new pastor, as reflected in our Mission Study. We're pleased to say that we've found many of those positive characteristics in candidates with whom we are communicating. In addition, many have strengths that could lead us forward in this post-pandemic age with clarity, wisdom and love. While any called pastor will be unique and different from the past, we seek to discern which of our candidates can best lead us faithfully and lovingly into the future. Our future looks bright, and while we do not yet know who God is calling to lead us, we know there are good, loving people in this process who want to be with us. We are grateful for that, and for your continued prayers.

**6/23/21** Message from the PNC: For 33 weeks and 31 multi-hour meetings we have been the "Brady Bunch", nine faces on a screen. Our "Alice" changes each week, depending on the order of our entrance into the realm of Zoom, but it's significant to note that your PNC had not met face-to-face since we began our work in November. We're happy to report that on the absolutely beautiful, sailboat-racing, freighter-chasing, chilly, windy evening of June 16<sup>th</sup> we met in person on Trinity Terrace for the very first time! We could hardly contain our joy to see that we actually have legs and feet that can do happy dances when we meet! After laughter and joking came prayer and planning. As we've said before, this is a process that takes considerable time, but we are making good progress. After our meeting, Pastor Sarah joined us to lead us in worship and an important reflection on discernment. We were so grateful for that time of worship together! We are heavily dependent on the Holy Spirit in this process, in the hopes that by the time we come to a decision, both our committee and our candidate will feel that God has lead us to that point together. Thank you for your continued prayers in this important process.

**6/9/21** Message from the PNC: We continue to make good progress in our search, conducting interviews, reviewing new PIF's as they come in to us, and making reference calls on candidates with whom we have progressed considerably closer with interviews. Although reference calls are very time-consuming, they shed light in ways that no resume' can. Consequently, we are very grateful for the amount of time and work that we put into these calls. We feel strongly that God is leading us to pastors who would bring energy, intellect, compassion, faithful leadership and most importantly, love and joy to our congregation.

We are also gaining deep respect and awe for the work of the Spirit in this process, and learning to listen carefully. A few weeks ago, Mike Kopasz spoke to you about the need for discernment in the work of a PNC, and how this spiritual process differs from a business-related search. We have seen this at work in our committee. Because we recognize and trust in God's presence in our deliberations, this is a time when we will be needing your prayers more than ever. In the upcoming weeks, please pray for our faithful discernment. Pray that we will recognize God's plan for us in choosing from candidates who could *each* lead us with excellence. And finally, we recommend tuning in to the Middle Hour Zoom series on Discernment that Sarah and Susan have prepared. The lessons will give each of us insight into our prayers and add much to one's personal, daily faith walk. Thank you for your patience and prayers!

**Communication to Councils and Committees 5/10/21:** The following is a report from the Pastor Nominating Committee to update you on our progress. Many of you have kept informed by reading the updates we have written to the congregation via the weekly church emails and bulletins. Those twelve messages can also be found on our church web site under the "Pastor Transition" link. Because not everyone may have read the updates, we will begin with a quick review of the Interim process and the necessary steps we have taken along the way.

It has been two years since the Rev. Dr. Peter Henry accepted a call to Davidson College Presbyterian Church, ending a long and very successful ministry with us. Since that time, we have completed many of the steps that our Presbyterian Church system requires in the period that we call "Interim."

In the first year, under the guidance of our Interim pastor, the Rev. Mark Diehl and through the contributions of many members, our The Mission Study Team (MST) and the "History-to-Our-Story" Team (HST) compiled and created in-depth documents to be used by the PNC in our search for a new Pastor/Head of Staff. This study period was a necessary step in the process of involving church members and creating a vision of what we hope for as we look to the future. Much of 2020 was spent working on and compiling those reports, despite the many challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Upon completion of the Mission Study Report, a PNC was elected by the congregation and began meeting in November, 2020. Our first task was to complete a "Ministry Information Form" (MIF) that would be submitted to our Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM). The MIF is a bit like a resume, developed to inform pastors about GPMC and the type of leadership we are seeking. The PNC used your thoughts from the Mission Study Report and then, through prayerful discussions, compiled a series of leadership qualities that we are seeking in a new pastor. This MIF is used by our Presbytery to help find candidates with similar qualities. Our completed MIF was approved in January by our Session and then by the Presbytery, allowing us to receive resumes and Personal Information Forms (PIF's) from pastors seeking a call.

**Where are we now in that process?**

Since January, the PNC has received and reviewed Personal Information Forms (PIF's) from 51 candidates. Most of those have been given to us from "matches" that the Presbytery has made with our MIF information and pastors seeking a call with a PIF on file with the Presbytery. Others are pastors who are self-referred and have expressed an interest in our congregation.

For each of those 51 candidates, we have carefully reviewed their PIF, checked information on line and on church web sites and listened to sermons, many times watching multiple sermons from individual candidates. After narrowing the list, we are currently in the process of interviewing candidates. We have been honored and pleased to meet fine people via our Zoom interviews who have an interest in becoming our next pastor. At the same time, we have been networking and reaching out to referrals from many respected pastors and leaders who have helped us in our search. Some of those referrals continue to come in. It is accurate to say that we continue to be open to new candidates, even as we are narrowing our search and working prayerfully toward discernment in understanding where God is leading us.

These are times when it is most important that we honor the strict confidentiality rules required by the Presbytery in a search process. While we have kept you updated on our progress so far, we want to thank you for understanding that we cannot report to you details about candidates we are considering. This is not for the purpose of exclusion, but for the protection and privacy of the candidates with whom we are meeting, who need to have that confidentiality upheld for the sake of their own congregations. Every one of them would want us to respect their privacy in a search process.

What we can tell you is that we have received high praises for our congregation and for you, it's leaders, in keeping our programs, outreach, worship, music and care for each other at such a positive level throughout the past year. Our web site, the "History" video and our Mission Study Report have all been carefully reviewed by candidates who remain impressed by the possibilities for ministry alongside us.

This is a good time to thank you and our families for your willingness to support us through months of Wednesday night meetings without the benefit of knowing what or who we have been discussing. Any PNC search process takes many months to complete, but this is an especially challenging time to be involved in a search, both for our congregation and for those seeking a call. We're grateful to you and to the entire congregation for your continued prayers, and we thank you for your patience in this important process. If you have questions, you can reach us by our email:

[pnc@gpmchurch.org](mailto:pnc@gpmchurch.org)

**4/28/21** A Message from the PNC: In the process of interviewing candidates for our next Pastor/Head of Staff position, we've received many positive comments about GPMC. We'd like to share just a few of them with you. To all who contributed and worked so hard on the MST Report, the comment that, "Your Mission Study Report is one of the

best I have ever read,” was much appreciated. “It’s refreshingly honest,” one candidate said. That preliminary work, including our History video have told candidates, “...more about your church than anything else I could have read.” About our commitment to our vision, we’ve heard, “There seems to be a fairly close bond between word and action in your church.”

Our candidates have thoroughly researched the depth of information on our web site, learning about us and our activities throughout and in spite of this pandemic that has forced us all to change. If you haven’t taken a look at our web site lately, we invite you to re-discover how many ways there are to become involved just by searching the site! Once again, we commend our lay leadership, members and staff on keeping us going, finding new ways to serve others, and continuing to reach out in ministry. We remain grateful for your support and prayers as we continue our discernment of candidates.

**4/18/21** A Message From Your PNC: When we entered into this process, our Presbytery representative made it clear that our discussions must be conducted with strict confidentiality. While we have kept you updated on our progress so far, we want to thank you for understanding that we cannot report back in great detail on all that we are doing. This is not for the purpose of exclusion, but for the protection and privacy of the candidates with whom we are meeting, who need to have that confidentiality upheld for the sake of their own congregations. Every one of them would want us to respect their privacy in a search process.

Since this strict confidentiality extends to our own families, this is a good time to thank them for their willingness to support us through months of Wednesday night meetings without the benefit of knowing what or who we have been discussing! We’re grateful to them and to the entire congregation for your continued encouragement and prayers. We’re honored that you have chosen us to represent you and thank you for your patience in this important process.

**4/4/21** A message from your PNC: As April begins, we are eager for the possibility of conducting our PNC meetings in-person! After six months, nineteen Zoom meetings and lots of homework, we have developed our MIF, reviewed over 38 possible candidates and their sermons, networked with over 40 contacts across the country and conducted very positive interviews. We are making good progress.

Despite the many drawbacks of the pandemic, “Zoom” has been an incredible gift for us. We would never have been able to accomplish as much without being able to meet together in this manner. As we’ve progressed in our search, our Zoom interviews with candidates have allowed us to see each other as we talk together. Technology has also allowed us to watch dozens of sermons over the past weeks. These advancements in technology have relieved GPMC of many added travel expenses needed by previous PNCs. As we enter this Easter season, we give thanks to God for you and for the hope that is ours through the promise of Easter. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

**3/25/21** An Update from your PNC: Despite the many drawbacks of the pandemic, “Zoom” has been an incredible gift for us. We would never have been able to accomplish as much without being able to meet together over the winter! As we’ve progressed in our search, we’ve been able to conduct interviews with prospective candidates via Zoom, allowing us to see each other as we talk together. Technology has also allowed us to watch dozens of sermons over the past weeks. These advancements in technology have relieved GPMC of many added travel expenses needed by previous PNCs.

Holy Week is a very busy time for all candidates. While we will not meet this week, we will continue to review resumes that come in each week, listen to candidates’ sermons and seek discernment in this important process. Thank you for your continued prayers. Debbie Bellovich\*, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Dan Grano\*, Cynthia Ford, Michael Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer. \*Co-chairs.

**3/15/21** A Message From Your PNC: It has now been a year since our congregation has met together in person for worship. Despite the physical separation from each other in these very challenging times, GPMC has continued to draw on our firm foundation to enhance our journey with intentional ministry to each other and to our neighbors in need. We have been complimented by candidates for those efforts and continue to be grateful to you and our staff for your commitment to fulfilling Christ’s mission in our world.

In the weeks since we’ve communicated with you, we’ve been very busy. We have been in contact with over 30 candidates and networked with many more pastors throughout the country to seek recommendations for our Pastor/Head of Staff position. We have begun interviewing candidates and remain very positive about the people we are meeting.

If you’re curious about what we’re looking for, we have based our search on the Mission Study Report that was prepared by the Study Team after many months of interviews with church members. You can find a link to it on our church web site. At the top of our web site, look for the “Pastor Transition” link. There you’ll find helpful information about our process and your hopes for our continuing positive journey together. No doubt many of our candidates have perused this information. We hope you have too! If you scroll down past our bios, you’ll find the Mission Study Report. So many of you contributed to its formation, and our PNC continues to use that report for guidance. On page 60-61, you’ll find our vision and mission statements and your “suggested qualities” for a new pastor. These hopes and aspirations were carried over to our Ministry Information Form (MIF) which is shared with candidates and is also on our web site. You can be sure that our PNC is working faithfully toward the hopes that you have put forth for us.

In her sermon on January 31, Pastor Sarah said, “Even now, God is preparing the next person to lead our church.” What positive assurance that is! It echoes the words of the



prophet Jeremiah in chapter 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.” Sarah’s quote and those words from Jeremiah remind us daily to call on God’s Spirit in our discernment process as we continue to seek candidates and begin our interviews. We continue to be grateful for all you do to support us in this mission. Please keep us in your prayers.

Your PNC: Debbie Bellovich & Dan Grano, Co-Chairs, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Cynthia Ford, Mike Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer

**1/28/21** In addition to reviewing resumes that will be passed along from our Presbyterian Church Leadership Connection (CLC), we are actively seeking recommendations from many sources. You can be of help in our search. In past travels, experiences or connections, if you know of someone who you would like to suggest as either a possible candidate or a resource for us, please send your recommendation to our email: [pnc@gpmchurch.org](mailto:pnc@gpmchurch.org) . Networking is a significant conduit for the Holy Spirit’s work! Thank you for your continued prayers, especially as we enter this new stage of our process.

Debbie Bellovich & Dan Grano, Co-Chairs, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Cynthia Ford, Mike Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer.

**1/19/21** Our Ministry Information Form has received approval from the Presbytery! We will now be able to receive information on pastors searching for a new call to ministry and will be able to begin networking as well. We’ve been busy planning for the important weeks that lie ahead, creating the groundwork for future interviews and prayerfully discussing questions about our knowledge of our church and its mission. It is in these moments that we can feel God’s Spirit leading us as we grow in unity together. We are extremely grateful for your continued prayers in this process.

Your PNC: Debbie Bellovich & Dan Grano, Co-Chairs, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Cynthia Ford, Mike Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer.

**1/11/21** We are pleased to announce that our completed Ministry Information Form was approved by our Session on January 4 and has been submitted to our Presbytery for consideration. This document provides descriptions of our church, our mission, leadership requirements and a job description for potential candidates. Once it is approved by Presbytery, we will be able to begin seeking candidates for a new Pastor/Head of Staff. As we’ve said before, we are so grateful to all of you who have worked to get us to this important point in our journey. Your contributions to the Mission Study Team and the History of our Story will continue to be the background that will help candidates learn about our Light by the Lakeshore. We hope to have additional updates soon. Feel free to contact us, and please continue to hold us in your prayers.

**12/16/20** Thank you again for allowing us to represent you on this faith journey. We have made excellent progress on completing our Ministry Information Form, which we hope to submit for Session approval soon after the holidays. We are grateful to those of you who participated in the work of the Mission Study Team, and to the MST for compiling such a complete document. Your contributions will continue to help us as we

move forward. We wish you all the blessings of Love, Hope, Peace and even Joy in the midst of these difficult times. For these are God's gifts to us on this and every Christmas.

Your PNC: Debbie Bellovich and Dan Grano, Co-Chairs, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Cynthia Ford, Mike Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer.

**12/3/20** The Ministry Information Form (MIF) that we are currently working on is a bit like a resume, developed to inform pastors about GPMC and the type of leadership we are seeking. We use your thoughts from the Mission Study Report and then, through prayerful discussions, compile a series of leadership qualities that we are seeking in a new pastor. This MIF will be used by our Presbytery to help find candidates with similar qualities. In addition, we'll be networking, using referrals and praying for those Spirit-led moments that often lead to great results. Because we believe strongly that this process will be Spirit-led, we are grateful for your continuing prayers. Please feel free to contact any of us with your questions or suggestions.

Debbie Bellovich and Dan Grano, Co-Chairs, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Cynthia Ford, Mike Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer.

**11/20/20** We are pleased to announce that we have begun weekly meetings, working towards the goal of calling a new pastor to lead our congregation faithfully into a new era. We are currently working to develop a Ministry Information Form (MIF) that describes our congregation to those seeking a call. We are incredibly grateful to all who contributed to the Mission Study Report, from which we are drawing much of our information. Grateful thanks go to the team that put this invaluable report together and posted it for members to read. We welcome your comments and ask for your prayers. Check your church directory for our email information:

Debbie Bellovich and Dan Grano, Co-Chairs, Don Ditmars, Chelsea Gilbert, Cynthia Ford, Mike Kopasz, Kathy Kurap, Peter Marks and Martha Speer.