

## Church Information Form

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are responsible for denominational vocational services. As part of the process of “matching” ministers and congregations, the Office of the Stated Clerk provides resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort, and open communication.

This Church Information Form (CIF) presents the local congregation’s history, challenges, and goals. It is our hope that this will help facilitate the search process by assisting both the church in focusing on future directions and applicants in gaining some sense of the nature and uniqueness of this congregation.

We encourage churches to list their vacancies on the Ministry Staff Opportunities webpage at [www.epconnect.org/mso](http://www.epconnect.org/mso). For more information or to send your posting, email [info@epc.org](mailto:info@epc.org).

Guidance for church-based human resources questions such as background checks, personnel policy manuals, and more is available at the Office of the General Assembly by contacting Marti Ratcliff at [marti.ratcliff@epc.org](mailto:marti.ratcliff@epc.org) or 407-930-4263.

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Please return completed form to:

Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
ATTN: OFFICE OF THE STATED CLERK 5850  
T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510  
Orlando, FL 32822

Phone: 407-930-4239  
Fax: 407-930-4247  
E-mail: [info@epc.org](mailto:info@epc.org)



**Part 1: Church Information**

1. Church Name First Presbyterian Church

Address 307 University Drive

Starkville, Mississippi 39759

Telephone ( 662 ) 323-1994 Fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail info@fpcstarkville.org Website fpcstarkville.org

2. Presbytery Central South Presbytery

Presbytery Ministerial Committee Liaison TE Waring Porter

3. Search Committee Chairman Andrew Fountain

Address 211 North Montgomery Street

Starkville, MS 39759

E-mail andrewfountain@reagan.com

Telephone ( 662 ) 822-0601

4. List all paid staff positions (use additional sheet if necessary)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <u>Senior Pastor</u>                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>Associate Pastor for Family Ministries</u>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>Director of Children's Ministry</u>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>Youth Ministry Director</u>                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>Youth Ministry Intern</u>                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>College Ministry Intern</u>                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>Pastoral Assistant/Office Administrator</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part time            |
| <u>Music Director</u>                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>Financial Secretary</u>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |
| <u>Organist/Pianist</u>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Full time            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time |

Nursery Coordinator

Part time

Communications Intern

Part time

Director of First Presbyterian Christian Preschool

Full time

5. List all key volunteer positions

Session

Diaconate

Ushers/Greeters

Media volunteers - sound/slides/livestream

Security volunteers

Sunday School Teachers - Children/College/Adults

Children's and Youth Activities on Wednesday nights

Children's Church volunteers

Bible Study leaders

Children's Choir Director/Pianist

Chairmen of key committees:

Office help

+

6. List all vacant positions

Position Available Senior Pastor Date of Vacancy 5/1/2025

Position Available \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Vacancy \_\_\_\_\_

Position Available \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Vacancy \_\_\_\_\_

7. Membership (state approximate numbers and percentages)

	Five years ago	Currently
A. Number of church members	<u>276</u>	<u>300</u>
B. Number of family units	<u>158</u>	<u>177</u>
C. Worship attendance	<u>125</u>	<u>195</u>

8. Community Growth  Increasing  Static  Declining

9. Profile of church members

A. Age:

14 % 0-11    13 % 12-18    2 % 19-24    5 % 25-34  
21 % 35-49    10 % 50-64    35 % 65+

B. Occupation:

16 % Business      22 % Professional      1 % Trades  
0 % Agriculture      1 % Stay-at-Home Parent      32 % Retired  
28 % Other (Please Specify) Birth-Student

C. Educational level of adults

\_\_\_\_ % some high school      \_\_\_\_ % high school      75 % college      25 % graduate school

D. Percentage of members belonging to the congregation

Less than one year 4 %  
5 years or less      20 %  
6-10 years      8 %  
10 years or more      68 %

10. Racial/Ethnic composition of:

A. **Congregation**

\_\_\_\_ % African-American      \_\_\_\_ % Asian      100 % Caucasian      \_\_\_\_ % Hispanic  
\_\_\_\_ % Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

B. **Community** (within 5-mile radius of church)

32 % African-American      4 % Asian      59 % Caucasian      2 % Hispanic  
2 % Other (Specify) Two+

11. Community Setting (check as many as apply):

Location

Rural       Small Town       Metropolitan       Suburban       Inner City

Function

Industrial       Agricultural       Recreational       Military       College/University

Approximate population of community: 25,000



## 14. Organizational Structure

List major boards, committees, and organizations that are part of your church and frequency of meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.)

Name	Purpose of Group	Number of members	Frequency of meetings	Leadership Role*
Budget & Finance	Budget	9	6/yr	3
Christian Education	Church School+ curricul	7	3/yr	2
Fellowship	Plan/execute events	10	as need	3
Property	Manage all property	15	as need	3
Ushers & Greeters	Schedule	15	as need	3
Visitation	Visit the homebound	22	1/mo	3
Worship	Worship planning	8	3/yr	2
Administration	Administrative oversight	11	as need	2
Personnel	Managing personnel	5	4/yr	2
Missions	Directing funds	7	4/yr	2
Strategic Planning	Building/future planning	7	as need	3

\*Indicate leadership role expected by using the number below:

1. Pastor takes primary initiative and responsibility.
2. Pastor and laity share responsibility.
3. Laity takes primary initiative and responsibility.
4. A staff person takes primary initiative and responsibility.

### Part 2: Financial/Church Campus Information

1. Current annual budget: \$ 1,200,000 Last year's annual budget: \$ 1,200,000  
(Attach a copy of current budget)
2. Percentage of income received toward budget: 82.00 %

3. Amount contributed for year (most recent complete reporting year)

A. EPC Percentage of Income	\$ <u>11,000</u>
B. EPC World Outreach Global Workers	\$ <u>16,000</u>
C. EPC Special Projects	\$ <u>1,007</u>
D. Presbytery Per Member Asking/Percentage of Income	\$ <u>6,600</u>
E. Other Missions/Missionaries	\$ <u>114,725</u>

4. Property owned by church

A. Describe buildings and property (other than manse), including condition.

Approximately 100 year old sanctuary building renovated in 2004; sanctuary renovated in 2023 to be historically accurate  
Office building built in 1973  
Educational building built in 1959  
Approximately 8 acres in the middle of town  
37 acre property & lake 5 miles north of town with pavilion and bathrooms

- B. Are your buildings adequate for your present program?  Yes  No  
If no, please explain:

Need more space for youth to meet.

- C. Is a building program or capital project projected?  Yes  No  
If yes, describe what, when, and projected cost

We are in the beginning stages of planning a new addition that would give us more welcoming/gathering space for Sundays and additional meeting space, which is sorely needed for our youth populations. Nothing would be done before we get a new senior pastor. We do own property around the current church building that will allow expansion over time. Projected cost of this project, which is just at the concept stage, is \$5 million.

- D. Does the church own a manse?  Yes  No

Condition:  Good  Fair  Poor # of Bedrooms

Pastor's Office/Study:  In Church  In Manse  Not Provided

Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Compensation:

A. The salary range we are prepared to offer:

Position: Senior Pastor \$ 110,000-135,000  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. The average annual increase over the past three years is:

Position: Senior Pastor \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or 1.60 %  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

C. Housing

- Housing Allowance  
 Manse Only  
 Either of the Above

D. Benefits and expenses

10% Retirement Plan (minimum 10% gross effective salary)  
Gold Plan Medical insurance (EPC medical coverage required for full-time TEs)  
Neg. Life insurance  
Neg. Social Security  
\$.725/mi Travel/mileage  
\$3000 Book allowance  
10 days Study leave allowance (minimum 2 weeks)  
20 days Annual vacation days (minimum 4 weeks)  
3 Number of worship services per year for which pastor is provided relief  
 (in addition to vacation and study leave)  
Neg. Sabbatical frequency and length \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

- E. The church participates in the EPC's medical benefits plan  Yes  No  
 F. The church participates in the EPC's retirement plan  Yes  No

### Part 3: Church Characteristics

*Check the box that most closely describes the current characteristics of the congregation.*

Our congregation...	Agree		Disagree	
1. Is spiritually vibrant	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
2. Demonstrates love for the pastor and his/her family	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
3. Readily shares their gifts with the rest of the congregation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
4. Places a high priority on sound biblical preaching	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
5. Effectively integrates newcomers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
6. Is engaged in evangelism	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
7. Is often found living their faith in their communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
8. Has a spirit of unity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
9. Cares about each other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
10. Is supportive of the Session and pastoral leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
11. Ministers well to members that are hurting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
12. Uses members' gifts in worship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
13. Contains people willing and able to lead the congregation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
14. Is capable of change when and where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
15. Is connected to and prayerful about what God is doing in the global church	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

16. How are elders and deacons initially trained and equipped for ministry?

- Pastor-led sessions several times over a 2 month period during which they review and study the EPC Leadership Guide, Book of Order, and Westminster Catechism
- Examined by the Session, giving testimony during this time
- Presented to congregation and asked questions from Book of Order; ordination for those needing it.

17. What is the Session's current practice regarding the ongoing discipleship of elders and deacons?

- Monthly devotional during Session meetings
- Meetings with ministerial consultant to assist with refocus of responsibilities of both groups to line up more biblically
- Ongoing training with ministerial consultant

18. In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

- Participate in the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, a walk through town with stops at various churches
- Support the Starkville Cross for Christ since its inception in our community
- Participation in Casserole Kitchen food ministry
- Planning/participating in community Palm Sunday service with other churches
- Sponsor and participate in community's yearly Disciple Now Youth weekend
- Invite local ministers to preach at Holy Week luncheon services

19. Describe the strengths of your congregation.

- Strong support for the EPC Essentials - a Bible-believing and preaching church
- Core of people who are willing to give their time and money to our church
- Support and mentorship for young men and women who have moved into ministry and mission; 5 who have moved on from youth pastor positions to seminary and become pastors; 4 who have gone into global missions; 1 currently serving as youth pastor (all of this over the past 3 generations)
- Strong support for missions - local, regional and global
- Congregation as a whole is supportive of and understands the need for children's, youth, and college ministry

20. List specific problems with which your congregation struggles.

- Volunteerism for teaching positions - specifically children
- Accepting change
- Prioritizing Sunday activities over travel sports
- Prioritizing church activities over sports events
- Supporting missions with time/physical presence (supporting with \$ is not a problem at all)

21. List major goals that the congregation has set for itself.

- Attracting and retaining young families
- Increasing our presence with college students; having an active vibrant student ministry
- Attracting a senior pastor who preaches the Word of God and understands the needs of the congregation

22. Has there ever been disciplinary action taken against a pastor of your congregation?

- Yes     No

23. Has there ever been any disciplinary action against an elder or deacon of your congregation?

- Yes     No

If you answered “Yes” to either 22 or 23, please explain.

24. Have you completed a mission statement, vision statement, and/or a strategic plan for your congregation?

Yes     No

If yes, Date completed \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, enter each statement or strategic plan (or attach copies if space below is limited).

Mission:

Preaching the Doctrines of Grace as a Part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)

Beliefs:

We are Starkville's Church that preaches the doctrines of grace and that is a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a global movement of evangelical Presbyterian churches. We joyfully share God's Good News fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Our Biblical, Christian faith is expressed through the EPC's Affirmation, The Essentials. We will be delighted to share with you further God's Truth -- including in our Sunday worship and Sunday morning Bible studies, as well as in all of our other ministries, mission outreach, and Bible studies throughout each week. Please feel free also to speak with our pastors, teachers, and other ministry leaders about God's Good News for you.

#### **Part 4: Leadership Expectations**

1. What are some key character strengths a person should bring to this position?

- Strong Biblical character: walks with integrity and leads by example
- An approachable and humble shepherd
- Invested in the lives of our congregation
- Passionate about missions, both locally and globally, as well as outreach to MSU students
- Ability to inspire stewardship and generous giving to the glory of God
- Energetically serves our community
- Welcomes feedback and responds with conviction and care

2. What are five key gifts/skills/abilities a person should bring to this position?

- Expository teaching of the Scriptures and committed to Reformed theology with a real-life application for the congregation, both believers and non-believers
- Committed to the Great Commission
- Demonstrate a genuine heart for shepherding the congregation with joy, compassion, and attentiveness
- Strong in organizational and administrative leadership
- Gifted in delegation to staff and congregation
- Ordained (or eligible for ordination) in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, with senior pastor experience, preferred but not required
- Master of Divinity required; further education appreciated

3. What are the primary pastoral duties for the position? (Attach a position description)

## Part 5: Church History

1. What do you consider to be the three most important events in the history of your church?

1983 - Joining the reunited northern & southern Presbyterian churches in the PCUSA

2005 - Expansion and renovation of our sanctuary building

2016 - Leaving the PCUSA with our property and joining the EPC

2021 - 200th Birthday of our church - unfortunately, we were unable to celebrate this event as we had planned because of Covid, so it doesn't stand out in our minds as a big event

2. What do you consider to be the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?

Following our most recent pastor's leaving, we've had the chance to reassess our committee structures and noticed that many had become less independent and engaged than our church has traditionally valued. We're excited to be strengthening them again, returning to the collaborative framework that helps everyone contribute meaningfully.

The culture of our church is both a challenge and a blessing. Being in a college town, church events can be impacted by college events a mile down the road.

The leadership of our Associate Pastor for Family Ministries has caused our youth ministry to grow so much and so quickly that we are challenged to keep up and adapt. We are having to manage meeting space and other related considerations such as trying to pull their parents into the fold (or monitoring the many children).

## Part 6: Other Information

### 1. List the last three individuals who held this position

Name	Dates of Service	
Martin Lifer	11/2013	to 4/2025
Olin McBride	8/2003	to 8/2011
Reg Parsons	1/1988	to 1/2001

### 2. Describe any significant factors about the church not covered in previous questions.

Our congregation went through a litigious battle with PCUSA in 2014-16 timeframe resulting in our voting to leave the denomination in 2016. We joined EPC in 2017. For congregation members who were around during this timeframe, it is remembered as a particularly hard time in the life of our church when many of us discovered we were sitting in the pews with people who had different beliefs about Christ and His Church.

We offered an 8:30 service before our last pastor left. We have suspended that service until we get a senior pastor, in support of our Associate Pastor and the additional duties he has taken on during this transition time. It will be expected by the dedicated 8:30 population that this service will be reinstated when we have a senior pastor.

Our Session and Diaconate are undergoing a restructuring this year as we move our duties more in line with the biblical callings of elders and deacons.



### Statement of Acknowledgment

The EPC believes that honesty and a commitment to open communication are critical to building the body of Christ. In that spirit, please confirm your agreement to the following statements by your signatures below.

1. We attest that the information contained in this Church Information Form is true and complete to the best of our knowledge.
2. We authorize applicants for the position(s) listed herein to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in this Church Information Form.
3. We authorize the Office of the Stated Clerk to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share this Church Information Form with potential candidates for the position(s) listed herein.
4. We acknowledge the Medical Plan and Retirement Plan services offered by the EPC's Benefit Resources, Inc., exist to serve EPC churches and their staff members. We also acknowledge the EPC's Book of Order requirement that EPC churches provide medical insurance to ordained staff members through BRI as mandated by the following Acts of the General Assembly:
  - 81-04 Terms of call for any minister of member churches shall provide for participation in the denominational hospitalization and disabilities programs. *(Minutes of the 1st General Assembly, 1-32)*
  - 81-06 The denominational group insurance plan providing health, disability, and life coverage shall be mandatory for all ministers within member churches. *(Minutes of the 1st General Assembly, 1-36)*
  - 88-08 Assembly amends participatory requirements for group health insurance plan by requiring participation of all ministers on the rolls of presbyteries with the exception of:
    1. Missionaries laboring in cooperative agreements with mission agencies;
    2. Ministers laboring in institutional agencies providing their own group insurance plan;
    3. Ministers afforded group insurance coverage as part of retirement benefits from a previous employer;
    4. Ministers without call, and ministers laboring less than 20 hours in a place of ministry. *(Minutes of the 8th General Assembly, 8-24)*

For information about EPC benefits through BRI, see [www.epconnect.org/benefits](http://www.epconnect.org/benefits), email [benefits@epc.org](mailto:benefits@epc.org), or call 407-930-4267.

Clerk of Session \_\_\_\_\_

Date 11 Mar 2026

Search Committee Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date 3/11/26