

Meet Reverend David Burke and family



July 27, 2014

Dear Members of Fremont,

The Pastor Search Committee joyfully and unanimously recommends the Rev. Dr. David Burke as the next Senior Pastor of Fremont Presbyterian Church.

This recommendation comes after fourteen months of meeting, searching, praying and listening, and we are confident God is calling David and his family to Fremont. David and his wife Kelsey have true hearts for the Lord and their ministry will be a tremendous blessing to our entire church family. They have joined with the Committee and the Congregation in faithfully praying for this process, and the Lord has placed this call on their hearts as well. As you will see below, David, Kelsey and their children are a wonderful, Christ-centered family that will be a great addition to Fremont.

For sixteen years, David has directed an incredible ministry at the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga where he leads hundreds of students in worship and discipleship, and has developed and mentored many new leaders that have gone on to serve at churches and para-church organizations throughout the country. During that time, David also served as an Assistant Pastor at Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church in Tennessee where he is truly loved by the congregation of over 2,000 members. In addition to these fruitful ministries, David's ministry experience and education have equipped him to be a dynamic leader in the church. His preaching style is described by many as conversational, but you will see that description barely scrapes the surface. His sermons are firmly rooted in scripture, well-informed, come from his heart, and will help deepen our faith while providing a practical application to daily life. David is also very relational and truly connects with the people with whom he leads, serves and works. As you read through the material in this brochure, you will learn more about David, Kelsey and their children, and will see how God has been preparing this path for them for many years.

David grew up in Seattle, Washington before moving to California to attend Pomona College in Claremont, CA. Following college, David went on to serve

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Letter from the Search Committee *(continued)*

as an intern at University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, and then at First Presbyterian Church in Boulder, CO. After serving at those two churches, David attended Princeton Theological Seminary where he received his Master of Divinity, which led him to his ministries in Chattanooga, and he recently completed his Doctor of Ministry through Fuller Theological Seminary. Throughout his ministry, David has always served in a multi-staff environment at large churches, which has equipped him well to serve as the Senior Pastor at our church.

David rose to the top of more than ninety potential candidates who came with an impressive variety of experience, education, and passions for ministry. The Committee spent countless hours poring over applications and listening to sermons and was rewarded as we completed the search process by spending time interviewing David and getting to know his family. David traveled to Sacramento twice to meet with the Committee, once including Kelsey. Several members of the Committee traveled to Tennessee to observe as David preached and lead worship, and also to spend time getting to know his delightful family. During those visits the Committee experienced how deep but also warm and inviting David and Kelsey are, and we have seen a picture of what Fremont will look like with David as the Senior Pastor. It is an exciting picture!

David comes highly recommended by the people who know him best and who have served by his side. Take a look at a few excerpts from the correspondence we have received:

“David is one of the finest, most sincere pastors with whom I have served. His heart is pure and his desire is unquestionable.” “David is a cherished favorite preacher at Signal Mountain Church. The congregation receives the Word of God from David with trust, engagement, and follow-through... There are few college ministries which compare to the quality of leadership and spiritual leadership and development which we have witnessed in his years as campus minister.” (Rev. Dr. Bill Dudley, previous moderator of the EPC General Assembly).

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Letter from the Search Committee *(continued)*

"I cannot recommend a person more highly as I deeply respect David and have benefited from his leadership, partnership in ministry and friendship over the past 14 years. We often refer to David as the pastor to the pastors among our college ministry colleagues. He is a shepherd that so many of us look to when we are in need of a pastoral voice. He is also a lot of fun to be around (as is his family)! Of all the people I have had the privilege of knowing in this life, David Burke is one of the people I most respect and admire. You would be crazy not to hire him!" (Rev. Becky Lahna).

"David is a shepherd." "There is no man I trust more than David." "It's hard to begin expressing how blessed a community would be to have him as a shepherd." (Ministry Partner Jason Leonard).

"David is a servant leader." "David reflects a deep abiding love for the Lord. He practices his faith and exercises spiritual disciplines in his life. The way he lives his life and his calm assurance is a very inviting example and witness to others." (Ruling Elder, Worship, Ralph Mohny).

"David is very relational, warm and approachable." "He is funny, has a good sense of humor and doesn't take himself too seriously." (Rev. Andrew Cornet).

The Committee is extremely grateful for the support, trust and prayer the Congregation has given us in this process. Serving God and the Fremont family in this capacity has been a blessing to us all. This process has been woven together with constant prayer, meditation, reliance on scripture, and listening for God's will. We are entering into this next step of the search with great expectations and faithfulness, and trust that this journey will come to a glorious conclusion according to God's will.

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Letter from the Search Committee *(continued)*

We encourage you to attend one of several informal “open house” gatherings on Saturday, August 16th to give you opportunity to meet David and Kelsey, and worship and the Congregational Meeting on August 17, 2014. Worship services will take place at the usual times at 8:55 AM and 11:00 AM, and the Congregational Meeting will be at 4:00 PM. David will be leading both services, and the meeting will be the time for the Congregation to make its decision.

Thank you again for your prayers, support and participation in this process, and continue to pray for Fremont, and for David and his family.

Blessings in Christ,

The Pastor Search Committee

Conrad Davis
Mark Eshoff
John Hansen

Dana Jaime
Lynn Jordan
Ken Moody

Scott Nichols
Marlin Ogden
Carol Wyatt



Letter from Pastor Burke

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights...” James 1:16

He loves to give good gifts to His children.

That is what I thought as I sat in both the Sanctuary and the Community Life Center of Fremont Presbyterian Church. I was among you all as a visitor several weeks ago, hoping that I would get the opportunity to call Fremont home for my family.



This call to be the pastor at Fremont is a gift. It is a gift uniquely made by our Heavenly Father. Only He would know the strands of my life so intimately, and be able to weave them together in one place at one time. I grew up the son of a university professor, and have grown up on campuses of universities, having most recently spent sixteen years in ministry to university students at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. And here Fremont stands at the gate of Sacramento State University, which I read was an intentional move by the people of Fremont over sixty years ago, sensing an opportunity to minister to a growing university.

I grew up outside the church, raised as an atheist. Yet God got my attention through His Word in the form of a Gideon’s Bible, and through the lives of friends who became a family when my own family was being torn apart. So it is fitting that God would call me to a city and university that questions whether God is real, but cherishes family. And here Fremont stands, centered around the Word of God and loving people as family.

I have also spent these years of ministry serving as an Assistant Pastor of Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church, a 2,000 member church outside of Chattanooga, Tennessee. At SMPC, worship services are classical in their orientation, with choir and organ joining to declare the praises of our God and King.

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Letter from Pastor Burke *(continued)*

During that same time, I have served as a Pastor to university students through the House, which involves almost 500 students weekly in worship and small group Bible studies. At The House, we have met in university classrooms, living rooms, church sanctuaries, and gyms, with students leading worship in more contemporary styles. And here Fremont stands, with worship in both classical and contemporary styles, under two different roofs, with one mission “to bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and His family, and assist them to develop into fully mature followers in order to fulfill His purpose for them and for the world.”

I have spent the last seventeen years of my life as a husband to Kelsey, whom I love with deep affection. She has been my greatest encourager, and challenges me to deepen my commitment to Jesus Christ. We share ministry together, and I marvel at the gifts that God has given her. I have spent the last 13 years as a father, with Hudson (13), McLean (9), Crew (8), Justice (5), Simone (5), and Dax (2 ½) giving me great joy and a richer understanding of God the Father’s love for all of us. And here Fremont stands, with members of the committee already loving my wife and children, assuring me that Fremont loves people as one family.

The parallels do not end there. Four years ago, my wife and I adopted twins from Ethiopia, and Fremont has a heart for that beautiful country. I love basketball, and Fremont has reached out to its neighborhood through providing a space for kids of all ages to play. I love the Seattle Seahawks, and at Fremont, there seem to be 49er fans around...(maybe I’ll stop there).

It is with such tremendous excitement that I stand ready to open this gift of ministry that the Lord has prepared for my family and me. And I stand in awe of our Father who loves to give good gifts to His children. I look forward to joining you all soon, to begin the adventure of loving our Lord and loving the city of Sacramento.

In the love of Christ,

David Burke



Kelsey and David



Hudson



Meet the Burke Family



McLean



Crew



Justice

Simone



Dax



Meet the Burke Family *(continued)*

Hudson - 13 (8th grade)

Hudson is a truth-seeker, an inventor and a deep-thinker. He is a fiercely loyal friend. He loves rock-climbing, the great outdoors and anything with bacon! He is happiest when he is climbing something, reading something, or serving someone behind the scenes.

McLean - 9 (4th grade)

McLean is as spunky and clever as she is nurturing. She is empathetic beyond her years. She loves sports, singing and art. She is equally quick to belly-laugh with a friend, trash-talk on the field, or take care of someone in need.

Crew - 8 (3rd grade)

Crew is joyful, humble and laid-back. He makes a friend wherever he goes. He loves to play any and every sport and may even know more about Seattle Seahawks football than his dad does! Crew's sweet nature may come from his extreme fondness for donuts, cake, cookies, and candy.

Justice - 5 (Kindergarten)

Justice is strong, passionate and a little too smart for his own good. He cartwheels everywhere he goes. He loves to be challenged on the sports field, in a board game or in the classroom. In spite of his energy and strength, he is incredibly sensitive and nurturing toward his little brother and twin sister.

Simone - 5 (Kindergarten)

Simone is as gentle as she is strong. She thinks and feels deeply, but only trusts those treasures with a trusted few. Though she may be shy in a group, she is a force to be reckoned with on the sports field and can hold her own among her brothers and sister. She loves swimming and building and is the hula-hooping champion of the family.

Dax - 2 ½

Dax is cheerful, curious and easily adaptable. He has never met a stranger. Though, when he greets new friends, they are often taken aback by his gravelly muppet voice! He does his best to keep up with the big kids, as long as he has his beloved blanket "Wubba" and a sippy-cup of milk in tow.

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Meet the Burke Family *(continued)*

Kelsey

Kelsey was raised in Colorado, and is a graduate of the University of Colorado. Kelsey lives life to the fullest. Nothing feeds her soul more than deep, nourishing relationships with other women. Her family comes first, but fellowship is a close second, and art and the outdoors tie for a comfortable third. As for gifting, God has blessed her with the ability to teach. But she always says that He gave her that gift because He knew she would procrastinate unless she had a teaching or writing deadline. She loves her husband above all her worldly blessings. He is her best friend and most challenging accountability partner. She laughs with him until her side hurts. Without him her house would be a wreck. They are a great complement to one another. She is thrilled to be starting a new adventure at Fremont and agrees with Paul that we are not citizens of this world. But until God calls her Heavenward, she's looking forward to unpacking her bags in Sacramento!



Fremont PSC: The Process

In Presbyterian tradition, the call of a pastor to a church is understood to be a three-way contract including the Presbytery, the congregation, and the pastor. Our committee was nominated by the Session and elected by the congregation to discern God's will through the Holy Spirit to present one candidate to our congregation to be voted upon and hopefully approved.

The Pastor Search Committee held its first meeting on June 26, 2013. It was an important one. We were able to review the theological and EPC Book of Order framework for conducting a pastoral search. We reviewed relevant Scripture, such as 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Timothy 3; and Titus 1. We prayed and immediately became aware of the enormity of the process, yet we were comforted knowing that the Holy Spirit, our committee members, staff, Session and the congregation would be bathing the entire process in prayer and love.

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Fremont PSC: The Process *(continued)*

The following is a summary of the process which the Pastor Search Committee (PSC) followed and how we arrived at our decision:

1. The CIF. We produced a Church Information Form (CIF) which acted as the initial window for candidates to understand who the Fremont family is and the criteria that the PSC would be using in evaluating them. This was done only after soliciting much written and verbal feedback from the congregation, staff and Session. It was amazing to see the unanimity in the criteria which was received. After assimilating this feedback, the final CIF included the following qualities as most important for our new pastor:

- 1. Effective preacher/speaker**
- 2. Continuous development of theological and biblical skills**
- 3. Helps people to develop their spiritual life**
- 4. Has a sense of direction of his/her ministry**
- 5. A good leader**
- 6. Helps people to develop their leadership abilities**
- 7. An effective teacher**
- 8. Works regularly in the development of stewardship growth**
- 9. A person who cultivates a close personal relationship with God**
- 10. Encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives**
- 11. Encourages others to assume and carry out leadership and**
- 12. Is mature and emotionally secure**

We are pleased to report that when David's wife, Kelsey, read the criteria above, she said, "David, this is you!" We agree.

2. Seeking Advice from a Professional. We met with a professional recruiter to learn techniques for finding and recruiting the right candidate. One of the good ideas which came out of that meeting was to produce a short video which tells potential candidates who we are, a bit about our history and what Fremont does within the Church walls and beyond those walls. We hope you were able to view that video online through the church website. We also explored various ways to identify potential candidates such as referrals by

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Fremont PSC: The Process *(continued)*

members of the congregation, social media searches, discussions with other pastors, etc. Finally, we discussed the interview process and interviewing tips. The advice was so good that we did not have to hire a professional recruiter!

3. Sharing our Journey. We communicated with the congregation and Session throughout the process. This was so important because we received good questions about the process and over 15 referrals from members. We also know that the written and verbal updates resulted in even more prayer from the congregation, staff and Session which we treasure so greatly.

4. Advertising the Position and Beginning the Reviews.

After completion of the CIF, we were able to post the position description on the EPC website and other church staff recruitment websites. The result over time was the receipt of over 90 position applicants! This part of the process required many hours of review including viewing and listening to many sermons online. By prayer, fellowship and the work of the Holy Spirit the committee was really able to cement what qualities we desired to see in the chosen candidate.

5. The Interview Questions. We then worked on developing a list of interview questions for each candidate who was to be considered further. It was important to ask each candidate the same general questions yet tailor each interview based upon a thorough review of their theological beliefs, background, qualities, education and past and present calls. The development of these questions was a key part of the process.

6. Phone and In-Person Interviews. After a series of phone interviews we were able to narrow the field even further. The finalists on our short list were each invited to Sacramento for a rather intense series of interviews over a three-day period. We were careful to observe the candidates in both a social and formal interview setting. The candidates were requested to plan and present a “mini-worship service” in both worship styles using a provided

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Fremont PSC: The Process *(continued)*

Scripture and a devotional (Bible study) of their choice. The committee then evaluated each plan, “mini-sermon” and devotional. We were also committed to praying for each candidate and their families, and the candidates were able to pray with us during these face-to-face interviews.

7. Further Discernment. The next step was to begin reference and credential checking. Each committee member was assigned references (both those provided by the candidates and those we sought independently) to phone, to ask an established group of questions, and to obtain additional information about the candidate. These phone calls involved much time and tended to affirm our thinking about each candidate. We certainly felt the leading of the Holy Spirit during the phone calls and our group discussion. We also included our Presbytery’s Ministerial Committee in the process to insure that they knew about the final candidates being considered. Their representative, John Hulsebus, was great about answering questions about the process and praying with and for us during the journey.

8. Observation. We then asked to see each finalist preach at their home church or a neutral pulpit. Their sermons were video recorded so that each committee member could view all the sermons if they were unable to attend. The committee members in attendance were careful to observe how the congregation reacted to the candidate and how the candidate related to the congregation.

9. Getting Close. The field was then narrowed even further after much prayer and committee discussion. A four day visit was scheduled with the likely candidate and his spouse. Following questions related to the Pastor position, the candidate and spouse were asked further questions seeking more information about their commitment to the Lord, their ministry, and the Fremont family. We were also able to share meals with the couple on several occasions. The candidate and spouse were also given time to worship at Fremont and check out the greater Sacramento area.

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Fremont PSC: The Process *(continued)*

10. A Week of Prayer and Fasting. The all important week of prayer and fasting for Fremont was taking place during the conclusion of our search journey. The committee was overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support which was shown during the entire process, but particularly during this week. Through the congregation the Holy Spirit affirmed the process and our final decision. We are forever grateful for your prayers, encouragement and guidance.

11. The Joyful Moment. On July 14th, 2014 the committee, filled with joy, voted unanimously to recommend David Burke as the next Senior Pastor of Fremont Presbyterian Church. We prayerfully hope that you will affirm that recommendation at the Congregational Meeting to be held August 17th, 2014 at 4 pm.

12. Is the Committee's Work Finished? We say "no." Our next responsibility is to join you in joyfully and lovingly welcoming our next Senior Pastor and his family into the Fremont family. We also will provide support for David and his family in his first months of ministry. We look forward to sharing that journey with all of you. Praise God for all that He has done and will continue to do!

Upcoming Schedule:

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| August 16 | 2:00 - 4:00 pm 6:00 - 8:00 pm | Open House Receptions <i>(Choose a time to drop by Ferguson Hall and meet David and Kelsey)</i> |
| August 17 | 8:55 am 11:00 am | David preaches in Sunday Worship |
| August 17 | 4:00 pm | Congregational Meeting to vote on calling David Burke as Pastor |
| September 1 (anticipated) | | David begins his ministry at Fremont |
| September 7 (anticipated) | | David's first Sunday / Ministry Fair |

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