

# UPC has a new Temporary Parish Associate

Meet  
Vanessa!



Dear UPC family,  
I am excited to become a part of the UPC family and look forward to getting to know you better. I am originally from North Carolina. I grew up in Henderson. I resettled here to be in the midst of family and friends whom I love dearly. Serving as your temporary Parish Associate is both an honor and joy.. Pastoral care during this season of Covid-19 has some challenges, but I look at this time as an opportunity for us to pause and breathe deeply and to spend time in conversation with each other.

*Peace be with you, Vanessa*

UPC is extremely pleased to announce the hiring of the Rev. Vanessa Hawkins for our part-time, temporary Parish Associate position. For this upcoming year, she will be the spiritual arms of the church providing Pastoral Care, as well as overseeing Adult Education and supporting the Presbyterian Women.

We are very fortunate to have her on staff as her professional and personal experience fit our needs in this particular time. Among her many varied roles, Vanessa was the Associate of Nurturing Ministries for New Hope Presbytery, has worked in three different positions around Racial Equity for the PCUSA Denominational Office in Louisville, KY and is currently working on her Ph.D. in Practical Theology with a sub-discipline focus in Christian Spirituality from Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. Once completed this will be her fourth degree. She already holds the following:

- Art of Spiritual Direction Program, San Francisco Seminary
- Master of Divinity, Interdenominational Theological Center
- Master of Arts in Christian Education, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- Bachelor of Arts (English & Journalism), North Carolina Central University

Vanessa is back in town sharing the caretaker role with her siblings for her mother who suffers from dementia. Like many of our congregants, she is walking the path of care taking for a loved one while also navigating her own spiritual journey.

While the Personnel Committee was impressed by her outstanding credentials, it was Vanessa's gentleness of spirit, enormous capacity for caring, and openness of heart that captured us. We truly feel blessed to have her join our staff, even if for a limited time.