

The Music Staff Search Committee is pleased to announce that Mark B. Pace has accepted our call to be the Director of Music: Organist/Choirmaster at First Presbyterian Church, effective January 4, 2016.

Mark Pace has been the Minister of Music and Organist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a 1200-member congregation in Concord, New Hampshire, since 2003. Among his several responsibilities and accomplishments at St. Paul's he has directed a 40-voice adult choir, youth and children's choirs, and a handbell choir. He has developed a RDMS (Rhythm, Dance, Movement and Song) Montessori-based program for preschool children. He has also worked with church members who are amateur instrumentalists to provide music for worship services. Besides organ and piano, he plays recorder and frequently incorporates his harp into worship services.

Before going to New Hampshire Mark was Organist/Choirmaster at First United Methodist Church in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, for 17 years. There he conducted adult and children's voice and handbell choirs. He also spearheaded the purchase of a new 55-rank pipe organ and supervised acoustical renovations of the sanctuary.

Mark grew up near Hendersonville, North Carolina, and attended the University of North Carolina – Greensboro, where he earned two Bachelor of Music degrees, one summa cum laude in Organ Performance, the other cum laude in Music Education. In 1987 he was conferred the Master of Music cum laude in Organ Performance from UNC-G.

Mark's wife Tracy is a high-school physics teacher; and their son Nate, an excellent violinist, is a junior in high school. While Mark will start work at First Presbyterian in January, Tracy and Nate will not be moving to Knoxville until the end of the school year.

Mark's fellow North Carolinian Thomas Wolfe once said, "You can't go home again." Mark thinks Wolfe is wrong. He writes, "From the first time that Tracy and I entered First Presbyterian Church of Knoxville, we felt like we had come home. I was in a place in my career where I was looking for a change. After 12 years of winters in northern New England I was ready for a church below the Mason-Dixon line. However, I was hoping that the church would have an organ! Never one to shy away from a challenge, I am looking forward to the new and exciting things that are in store for First Presbyterian Church and for me. On a serious note, I have had nothing in my life where I felt more that this is where God wanted me to be, than in the decision to join you at First Presbyterian. I am not one that has ever heard the voice of God, but I do believe that I am led by his Spirit to join you in the New Year."

To God be the glory!