

About Mark Harper...



Mark enjoys drawing, painting, walking, hiking with his dogs, and spending time with his three adult children. One of Mark's sons is located in Atlanta, GA, working at the Southern Poverty Law Center; his second son lives in Charleston, SC, working as a historic preservationist; and Mark's daughter lives in Denver, CO, working as a geographic information specialist. Mark likes to say he "was born into the church." Both his parents were active in the Peace Movement and inspired by the Sojourners Community, and his father was a Presbyterian Minister. Mark's mother, age 93, lives in VA.

Education:

- Princeton Theological Seminary, Master of Divinity (1994)
- Duke University Divinity School, Part-time studies (1989-1990)
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies (1985)

Ordination: October 30, 1994

Recent Positions:

- Pastor and Head of Staff, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Athens, Ga, 340 members, Urban, 2004-present
- Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Pa, 240 members, Suburban, 1998-2004

Selected Continuing Education:

- "**The Call of this Moment:** An Anti-Racism Workshop and Masterclass with the Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis." 2020
- "**Hoping Together:** PC(USA) and Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren Partnership Conference" at Columbia Theological Seminary. 2018.
- "**Conflict Mediation Training** with the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center." 2017.
- "**Racism and the Church**" with Dr. Catherine Meeks and the Rev. Nibs Stroupe. 2017.

Pastor Mark Harper



"I believe God is leading me to a life-giving, justice-loving community of disciples that is leaning into hope while cultivating a spirit of joy."

Takoma Park Presbyterian Church



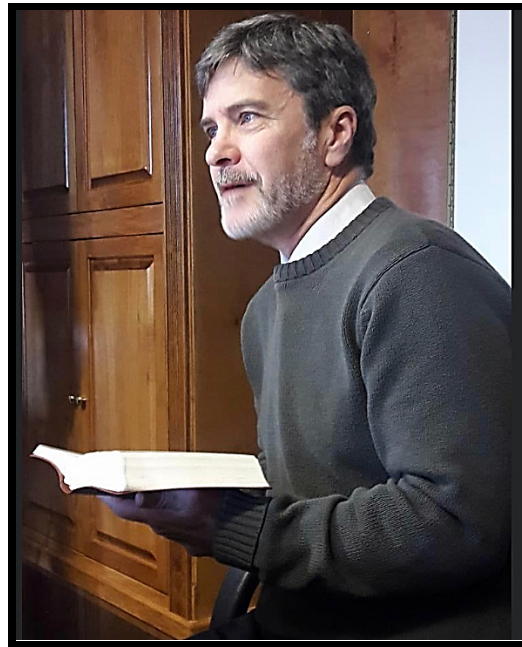
Rev. Mark Harper is a life-long Presbyterian, a preacher's kid, a graduate of Princeton Seminary and an impassioned Pastor who has served churches in PA and GA for over 25 years. He is currently the Pastor and Head of Staff at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens, GA.

Mark has a long history of involvement in faith, justice, community and other issues important to TPPC. This includes the "Inter-Faith Sanctuary Coalition of Athens," a program that advocates for all immigrants regardless of status. Mark is a Board member of the New Hope House, a group that offers support for Georgia's death row prisoners and their families. He has also been active with the Church's sister parish in the Czech Republic.

Mark says he began to sense a Pastoral calling while he was a young PCUSA Volunteer at a health clinic in the Congo. That call deepened through his work with the homeless at the Open Door Community in Atlanta in the late 1980's. Today, his ministry reflects this strong commitment to serving others, building community and following God's call for peace and justice in a troubled world. For example, Mark has helped bring people together to address structural racism, including working with

local NAACP members to plan an Athens Lynching memorial.

Mark's spiritual gifts include compassion, encouragement, and imaginative activism. His leadership style is collaborative and empowering. Mark is a life-long learner and continues to explore new areas including conflict resolution through mediation.



After completing training with Lombard MPC, he served on his Presbytery's conflict resolution committee.

The PNC Perspective

We believe Rev. Harper's warm and engaging personality, strong preaching skills, his call to action and alignment with

TPPC's values make him exceptionally qualified and the right choice for TPPC. Mark enjoys sermon making, likes to hold up our national narrative to the Gospels, and reads widely to inform the message.

Mark enjoys working with youth – his Sunday morning time with children fondly reminded us of "Mr. Rogers".

Mark seeks to advance peace and justice in his ministry. In his own words... ***"Because we are living in a nation where our sins of racism and injustice towards the poor have been dramatically exposed, I pray that I can partner with parishioners who are actively engaged with naming and working towards the healing of the neighborhoods and institutions where they live, work, and worship."***

Mark feels deeply about caring for creation and the urgency of the climate crisis, saying ***"Even now, God longs for us to remove our knee from the throat of the earth so we can all breathe again."***

A long-time colleague describes Mark as the "finest colleague she has ever worked with."

+ Grace and Peace +