

Pastor Introduction & Biography

It is with gratitude that the Pastor Nominating Committee introduces our candidate for the role of senior pastor, **Rev. Dr. Andrew Stepp**, to the Mandarin Pres Church Family. He comes to us with remarkable pastoral experience, gifts in building relational community, a missional heart, and a love for the Lord which is foundational to how he ministers.

Andrew grew up in West Palm Beach, Florida, where his father was the senior pastor at Memorial Presbyterian Church for 29 years. Though he cannot remember a time when he did not know Jesus, his faith began to take deeper roots in his teenage years through youth ministry. From the earliest stages of his faith, God was shaping in him a heart for service. Through the example of his parents in ministry and mission experiences as a teenager in Brazil, Peru, and Haiti, God sealed in him the call he would later accept.

During his first year of college, God called Andrew to serve in full-time ministry. It was a life-changing experience that altered his career direction from international business to ministry. He graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science in Biblical Studies from Columbia International University. God sharpened his heart for ministry on the mission field in Brazil as he spent his summers serving at a leadership training institute that equipped church planters and pastors among the indigenous tribes. Andrew loved exploring the different cultures, learning the languages, and sharing the Gospel.

After college, Andrew followed God's call across the country to California to serve First Pres Berkley as the Missions and Evangelism Intern. It was a thriving Christ-centered congregation with a historic missionary-sending focus. Over two years, he planned more than twenty mission trips, facilitated several offerings of the Alpha course, was trained as a Stephen Minister, and planned various service projects around the Bay Area. It was there at church that Andrew met his wife, Cauleen, who was attending dental school in San Francisco. They first connected over a shared passion for the mission field and were married after she graduated.

In 2004 Andrew began his Master of Divinity at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. While studying, he served two very different churches. In 2005, he joined the staff at Bel Air Presbyterian Church (2000+ covenant partners) as the Interim Global Missions Coordinator, managing all the facets of their global missions ministry until they could hire a missions pastor. He spent 2006-2007 preaching weekly for a historic presbyterian church in the heart of East LA – Faith United Presbyterian Church. It was located on a bustling street in the middle of a Spanish-speaking community, however, no one in the church spoke Spanish. As a result, its membership had dropped from over a thousand to under thirty, and Andrew worked with presbytery leaders to lead the church through a merge with a vibrant Spanish-speaking congregation.

In 2007, First Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas, called Andrew to be their Pastor of Evangelism. With over 3000 members, FPC is one of the largest churches in ECO and the oldest church in its city. It is located in the heart of Houston and sits at the strategic crossroads of art, education, and medicine. Over the last fifteen years, Andrew has served in various pastoral roles – Evangelism (2009-16), Missions (2011-16), Discipleship (2015-16), Worship (2019-21), and most recently as the Executive Pastor (2017-present).

Andrew's leadership has shaped virtually every aspect of life at First Presbyterian Church, but what he is truly known for in his congregation is as a Bible teacher. In his words, "As a disciple and a pastor, I am called to preach and teach God's Word, equipping followers of Christ with a biblical worldview that captures their hearts and fixes their attention on God's story." He created a curriculum called *Get a Grip on the Bible*, which helps people learn the central timeline of Scripture and how the books of the Bible fit into the story. To date, over 1200 people have taken this course. He has facilitated four sessions of Bible in 90 Days, in which over 350 people have journeyed through Scripture with him. He also started a weekly Bible class called "Basic Training in the Bible," which averaged just over 100 people each week before COVID. In response to COVID, he worked with his discipleship team to create and launch a Bible reading program, *Cover to Cover in 100 Days*, organizing 350 people in online small groups. He enjoys teaching large classes but also loves sitting with small groups, dissecting scripture, and responding to any questions that might arise.

Over the last fifteen years, Andrew demonstrated leadership across the congregation through vision casting, strategic planning,

and managing seasons of crisis, including denominational discernment, Hurricane Ike recovery, Hurricane Harvey recovery, and most recently through Covid and political tensions. As Executive Pastor, he managed a staff of over 100 team members. He excelled in building bridges between the operational teams and the ministry leadership, introducing creative and engaging ways to cast vision together and build unity and momentum across the various ministries.

In the community, Andrew has served on the board of directors for Allegro Organizational Solutions (2015-present), the Nehemiah Center of Houston (2011-2014), Presbyterians for Renewal (2010-2014), and the Arabic Presbyterian Church in Houston (2009-2015).

About the Stepp Family

Cauleen grew up in the central valley of California and graduated from Pepperdine University with a B.S. in Biology and from University of the Pacific School of Dentistry with a Doctorate in Dental Surgery. During her career as a dentist, she spent several years working in non-profit settings and, in 2017, opened her private practice – Stepp Family Dentistry. She enjoys spending time with her family, her Goldendoodle (and Dental Therapy Dog) Lucky Altuve, traveling, swimming, golf, yoga, pretending to be a foodie with her husband, and even—strangely—driving her kids around to their extracurricular activities.

Before children, Andrew loved coaching football. Outside of the office, he enjoys cooking, hunting & fishing, golfing, and hanging out with his family and friends by the pool.

The Stepps have two children. Channing is entering sixth grade. She is a black belt in taekwondo, loves dogs, and wants to work for Nasa one day. She can often be found in the kitchen experimenting with different baking recipes. Shepherd is entering third grade. He loves Legos, video games, and everything Star Wars. He has one speed, and it is full speed!

