

Youngstown Presbyterian calls associate pastor



At a special socially distant congregational meeting this summer, the First Presbyterian Church of Youngstown voted unanimously to welcome the Rev. Steve Hong, pictured, as its new associate pastor of family life – a call Hong joyfully accepted.

Hong comes to Youngstown with a Master of Divinity from Bethel University and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA by the Presbytery of Western New York. He brings extensive experience in ministry as a chaplain for the Ohio State University Medical Wexner Medical Complex, director of small group faith formation and young adults, and pastor of youth and young adults at Maple Grove UMC in Columbus, Ohio.

Hong is no stranger to the Lake Ontario region. At the age of 5, his family immigrated to Mississauga from Seoul, South Korea. They lived near Lake Ontario until his family immigrated to San Diego in 1995 and he was led to the Midwest for ministry.

Reflecting on his history with this area, Hong said, “When I visited Youngstown the first weekend of May, I was amazed and awed that I could see the silhouettes of Mississauga and Toronto from the shores near the church building. I thought, ‘Wow, as I live into the future God has for me, I am able to see my past.’ I’ve been excited about this thought ever since.”

A press release explained the associate pastor nominating committee (APNC) spent several months on Zoom to find the candidate that would lead the church to grow in its faith. The committee wanted a pastor that will directly address key congregational priorities centered on the emerging needs in the community, such as an aging population and a growing need to enrich programs for youth and families.

“Steve Hong brings excitement, experience, and expertise in not only youth and young adult ministries, but, having worked as a hospital chaplain, in pastoral care, as well,” said the

Rev. Dr. Rex Stewart, lead pastor of Youngstown Presbyterian. “I know I speak for the families of our congregation, mine included, when I say I’m very thankful he’s joined our ministry team!”

Hong started full-time ministry in August and said he looks forward to being a part of the community. He looks to the future with Holy Spirit-led creativity and Christ-centric mercy for each other and for all.

Services at First Presbyterian of Youngstown are in person and online at 10 a.m. Sundays.

Pastor Steve wishes to invite all area youth 6-12 grade to Sunday School held at 11:30 a.m. Sundays.

For Sunday church reservations or information on children and youth programs, call 745-7067, email stevehong@youngstownpres.org, or visit the church’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/youngstownpres>.

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