

**John Knox Presbyterian Church  
Associate Pastor Nominating Committee  
Sunday, May 4, 2025**

*Presenting*  
**Carter Rief**





I was born in Montgomery, Alabama in 1996 to Mike and Susan Rief. I'm the middle son between two sisters, Mary (older) and Anna Grace (younger). Being the only son and providentially born in the middle of them, I'm grateful to have ingrained in me the seriousness and protectiveness of an older brother accompanied by the scheming, teasing, pranking nature of a younger brother. After graduating high school in Montgomery, I attended Wofford College and graduated in 2019. By

God's sweet grace, I not only earned a degree from the best small liberal arts college in the land; I also met and fell in love with Grace.



After graduating from Wofford, I spent a year just outside of Washington D.C. and was a part of the Capital Fellows Program, a nine-month leadership and discipleship program hosted by a Presbyterian church in McLean, Virginia. After completing that in 2020, I packed my bags, grabbed a mask, and moved to Durham where I began

seminary that fall. While I was learning Greek and church history, Grace was learning genetics and earning her Masters in Genetic Counseling at the University of South Carolina. We muscled through a season of dating, graduate school, ministry discernment—and finally, we got engaged and were married at First Presbyterian Church Greenwood on June 11, 2022 (Best. Day. Ever.). During our first year of marriage—and my final year in seminary—the Lord led me to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and I began the ordination process as an inquirer.

Not long after, I reached out to a good friend from Wofford (whom many of you know) to see if her home church was still looking for a Youth Director. Jessica connected me to the church, and the Lord called Grace and me to Greenville in June 2023 where we've come to love this congregation and serve in its life and ministry.

While we've lived in Greenville, a few things changed. We have a dog, Miller, whom many have heard me talk about, and Grace has changed jobs. She now works for Baylor Genetics remotely out of Houston, TX. And for the few changes, many more things have stayed the same. Grace and I keep enjoying walking together, getting ice cream or good food, and trying to figure out how to use the overpriced espresso machine we bought on a whim. We love continuing our life together in Greenville!



## Statement of Faith

I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: eternally existent as one substance in three persons. I believe in God the Father Almighty, who created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, who sustains them by his power, and who called creation good. The same God who created beasts and animals chose to create humanity in God's image in order that they might image God in the world. But humanity in its willfulness disobeyed God's command and was mercifully removed from God's presence in Eden so that they might not eat of the tree of life and dwell eternally in sin. Despite our sin, God did not forsake us. God continued to speak to the people of Israel, to guide and direct them through the law and the prophets.

God spoke fully in the person of Jesus Christ, His Son, the Word of God. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the virgin Mary conceived and bore Jesus: fully God and fully human. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, died a criminal's death on the cross, was buried, and on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and later ascended to the right hand of God where he dwells eternally—having defeated sin and death, offering salvation to all who place their faith in him. In the resurrection, God vindicated the death of Jesus Christ and redeemed the once-broken relationship between God and humanity. And salvation is not incumbent upon human works, good deeds, or right living. Salvation is a gift of God's grace to us in Christ which we receive by faith and faith alone. The Holy Spirit engenders faith lest faith become a work of our own. It is the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, the Spirit of the living God, who fosters the faith within us that justifies us before God in Christ, and it is the Holy Spirit who draws us closer in obedience and faithfulness toward the life God has for us, namely our sanctification.

The same Holy Spirit who justifies and sanctifies also equips the Church for ministry in the world in and through and for Christ. The Church consists of both local gatherings of believers and the universal body of Christ in this world. The mission of the Church is kerygmatic—proclaiming the gospel of salvation in Christ alone. The proclamation of the gospel occurs in the life of the church through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the two sacraments which Christ gave the Church: baptism and communion. These sacraments are God-given signs whereby the church remembers, enacts, and experiences anew God's extraordinary gift of grace to us in Christ. These signs point to the love and grace of God toward us as we remember the sovereign, sacrificial love of God toward us in baptism and communion.

Scripture, God's Word written, speaks to us the story of God's redemption of the world in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Scripture is authoritative in all matters of faith and faithful living declaring God's will for us as God's people. Scripture originates not from human minds, but as inspiration from the Spirit who guided and directed the processes of writing, compiling, and uniting the books of the Old and New Testaments from ancient times to become for us the Bible. I believe Scripture is to be interpreted with care and attention to literary style and its ancient

origins, though that does not discount its decisive and unequivocal claim that it is Christ and Christ alone who offers salvation to the world. The Church forsakes being the Church when it attempts to arbitrate which portions of God's Word are still 'relevant' today and thereby dismisses the entirety of God's Word afforded to us in Scripture. The Church ought to continue mining God's Word for fresh expressions of the gospel to proclaim redemption in Christ. Scripture is for me the authoritative Word of God over my life and faith, and I continue to turn to God's evergreen promise of salvation in Christ declared in God's Word.

Dear John Knox Church,

For almost two years now, I've had the privilege of serving as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at our church. And as many of you know, during this time I've also been in the ordination process of our denomination. After interviewing with the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee and accepting their offer to be called as a pastor, we've come to this vote.

I will admit that Grace and I are overjoyed at the idea of my staying on staff at John Knox and being entrusted to serve as a pastor to this congregation. I'm grateful, too, for the committee's discernment that this role is in many ways similar to the one in which I currently work: maintaining my primary ministry responsibilities for our youth, college students, and young adults. And I'm excited for the opportunity to expand my work in the life of the church through worship leadership, congregational care, and any other pastoral duties as required. Over the last five years, stretching back to the start of seminary up until now, I have prepared earnestly to serve God's people as a pastor. And now that the time has come for this to be voted upon officially, I could not be more grateful that the Lord has led me to this congregation. Since I started at John Knox, I've been in awe of God's love and goodness at work in this church, particularly its younger members.

I do not take it for granted the love and care and support that the entire congregation shows to its youth, and you should know it has been a joy to work alongside you all. Being on the John Knox staff has been a gift. Serving this church has been a gift. And I pray the opportunity to do so in this new role will be a gift as we seek to glorify God and love one another in all that we do.

Yours in Christ,  
Carter



**Proposed Annual Terms for Pastor Call  
for Carter Rief  
from John Knox Presbyterian Church**

**Effective Salary:**

Cash Salary	\$34,000
Housing Allowance	\$22,000
SECA Supplement	\$ 4,284
<u>Other Allowances. Deferred compensation</u>	<u>\$ 3,000</u>
 Total Effective Salary	 <b>\$63,284</b>

**Benefits Paid on his behalf:**

Board of Pensions: Pension, Death and Disability, and Medical Insurance for Carter and spouse	\$27,454
<u>Dental and Vision Insurance</u>	<u>\$ 983</u>
 Total Financial Investment	 <b>\$91,721</b>

**Reimbursable expenses (by voucher):**

<u>Professional Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 6,000</u>
Total Reimbursable Expenses	<b>\$ 6,000</b>

**Other Benefits:**

- Paid Vacation - 4 weeks, including 4 Sundays
- Paid Continuing Education - 2 weeks including 2 Sundays
- Family & Parental Leave - per Foothills Presbytery Policy

In the seventh year of service, the congregation will provide for a three-month Clergy Renewal Leave, continuing the salary and benefits for that period, and providing for pulpit supply in the pastor's absence