

March 22, 2020

Elizabeth River District Superintendent Wayne Snead announces that Michael Whaley is projected to be the lead pastor at Oak Grove United Methodist Church. The change will be effective June 24 following Annual Conference.



Michael is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and an ordained elder in full connection in the Virginia Conference. He has served churches in the Virginia Conference and the Western North Carolina Conference and is currently serving in extension ministry as the Director of Outreach for Richmond Friends of the Homeless. Michael has a proven track record in leading both traditional and contemporary worship. In 2016, Michael was nominated for the Harry Denman Evangelism Award which honors United Methodists in each annual conference whose exceptional ministry of evangelism brings people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ.

Michael has been quoted as saying, “We must never change the message of the Good News, but we can change the manner in which we share the Good News to reach more people.” Michael is known by his colleagues as a pastor who empowers laity and seeks ways for the entire church to be partners in ministry to the world. He is well known as one who believes in and practices an active prayer life. Michael meets people where they are, listening to their needs and comforting their souls.

Prior to answering God's call to full-time ministry, Michael had a successful career as a business executive in the financial services industry. Michael has a passion for helping people put their faith into action through mission. On a local level, he has been involved in ministry with multiple non-profits, including the Ada Jenkins Center, the Chesterfield Colonial Heights Alliance for Social Ministry, Stop Hunger Now and Bags of Hope. Michael leads by example. He can often be found serving in a soup kitchen, working on a Habitat House, or delivering food backpacks to under-resourced school children. Internationally, he has worked with Helping Children Worldwide (Child Rescue Centre-Sierra Leone, Africa) and has worked extensively with the ZOE Empowerment Ministry in Kenya. Michael has led mission teams to Kenya, Sierra Leone, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Cuba, and to multiple locations within the continental United States.

Michael is married to Debbie, who is the vice principal at Bettie Weaver Elementary School in Chesterfield County. They have one daughter, Ashton, who currently serves as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Alaska. Michael loves to travel and spend time outdoors hiking in the woods or spending time at the beach. He also enjoys a healthy lifestyle and makes his daily workouts a priority. Michael has a passion to live out the kind of contagious Christianity that can influence and encourage the entire community, one life at a time. Michael and Debbie look forward to becoming part of the Oak Grove family as they partner with us in our mission to Connect, Grow & Serve.