



First  
Presbyterian  
Church  
of Waynesboro, Virginia

# The Columns *Online*

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## Part-time pastors: No longer unicorns.

*Bi-vocational pastor Julie Rafferty shares her experience*

Even 10 years ago, part-time pastors in the PC(USA) were a bit like unicorns — unlikely to be seen. But these days, a call of fewer than 40 hours a week (considered full-time) is much more common both inside and outside the PC(USA). As a purposeful bi-vocational pastor, it has been my personal experience that many pastors and churches do not intentionally make the decision to move from a full-time to a part-time pastor. Instead, they are compelled into a part-time call based on reduced people, finances or both. And yet, part-time pastors and churches continue to do God's work, exemplifying the truth that "Jesus won't abandon you if you don't have a full-time pastor." Considering my own experience and the ever-changing church climate, I pause today to assess what is working and what is not working when it comes to part-time ministry calls.

*Continued.*



Rafferty.

### What is working

- **PC(USA) benefits and the Board of Pensions' commitment:** PC(USA) requires benefits for any installed call of 20 hours or more. In doing so, they have made it possible for clergy to serve a church part-time and have health benefits and participate in the retirement plan of the PC(USA). In a world where so many part-time jobs do not offer benefits, this is the key to making part-time ministry a feasible real-world option for those who choose to pursue bi-vocational ministry.

- **IRS “two places of work” mileage deduction:** The IRS allows for deducting travel when you drive from one job to another on the same day. For clergy with two jobs, this can be helpful.

- **Negotiable terms of call:** My second vocation is a high school math teacher. “Everything is negotiable,” I frequently tell my students. Having two jobs can make it even more difficult to legitimately take vacation time since the employee needs to coordinate time away from both jobs simultaneously. Thus, the PC(USA) terms of call worksheet allow for clergy to negotiate — perhaps additional Sundays away for a part-time pastor in exchange for a raise one year. Certainly, not every church is flexible, but it has been my personal experience that most churches understand that part-time employment offers unique challenges and thus, they are willing to listen and adjust terms of call according to what is best for clergy and the church.

- **Rigid boundaries:** It is no surprise that part-time pastors need even more stringent boundaries to carve out privacy and sabbath. I have made it a rule that I will never take time off from one job to work another job. This has served me well along with separate social media accounts and out-of-office messages.

- **Church leadership empowered:** Churches with part-time ministers correctly see their role as essential to the church's work and ministry success. A part-time call affords and necessitates a real opportunity for employed leadership and volunteer leadership to partner together in the work and ministry of the church.

### What is *not* working

- **Presbytery expectations:** Unfortunately, part-time pastors seem to be expected to participate fully in their presbytery even within their part-time hours. I have found it really challenging to moderate a committee and attend all presbytery meetings and trainings within my allotted hours. All of this said, I think my presbytery is trying to make changes and look for ways to allow part-time pastors the flexibility needed. In the past, trainings were only offered on one day and time, which means that I can rarely participate. However, there's been a recent push to incorporate asynchronous online and Zoom options, which is helpful.

- **Continuing education opportunities:** There are very few continuing education options that are possible in a part-time schedule. Additionally, there is very little incentive to participate in a week-long continuing education option when 20 hours is a normal work schedule. Shorter 2–3-day trainings and conferences would allow part-time clergy more flexibility and incentive to participate. I have found it helpful to plan my own continuing education options with colleagues, but this often takes more time and effort than participating in a pre-planned option.

- **Church and clergy coordination and understanding:** As mentioned above, the move from a full-time to part-time call is often motivated by lack of members or lack of money. As such, many churches still hold onto full-time expectations of their part-time clergy. Obviously, this can lead to inappropriate expectations in all areas. It would be extremely helpful to have some education around this transition or perhaps an interim to guide a church as they make a change. In addition, many churches see part-time ministry as temporary with the future goal to return to full-time ministry. This has the effect of discounting and devaluing the part-time call as well as diminishing the church and the pastor's joy.

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# Music Notes for November 20

This week marks the final Sunday of the church year, when we celebrate Christ the King! Since it is also the Sunday before Thanksgiving, the music will celebrate both. The opening hymn is *Crown Him with Many Crowns*, the sparkling hymn known as DIADEMATA. The music for this well-known tune was written in 1868 by English composer **George J. Elvey** (1816-1893). When he was but nineteen years old, he became organist and master of the boys' choir at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, where he remained until his retirement in 1882.



Elvey.

The closing hymn is *Now Thank We All Our God*, with the original German text ("Nun danket alle Gott") by **Martin Rinkart** (1586-1649). **Catherine Winkworth** (1827-1878) translated the text into the English version we sing today. The tune was composed by **Johann Crüger** (1598-1662) and has been adapted by composers ever since, from Johann Sebastian Bach to Felix Mendelssohn to **Sigfrid Karg-Elert** (1877-1933). His *March Triomphale*, based on the tune, will serve as this week's postlude.



Karg-Elert.

## Our Worship Channels

*click on the logos*



Worship This Week  
Scripture lessons: Psalm 46  
Luke 23:33-43  
Sermon: Strange sort of king...

# THANKSGIVING

# BRUNCH

THIS SUNDAY FOLLOWING WORSHIP.





# This Week in History.



The Holland Tunnel opens. Named for Chief Engineer Clifford Holland, it connects New York, NY and Jersey City, NJ. under the Hudson River. The Holland Tunnel is the first underwater tunnel built in the U.S.

**November 13, 1927**



Newspaper reporter Nellie Bly sets out from New York to beat the 80 day 'record' of Jules Verne's imaginary hero Phileas Fogg. Bly (pen name for Pittsburgh native Elizabeth Cochrane) completed her circumnavigation 72 days later to a tumultuous welcome.

**November 14, 1889**



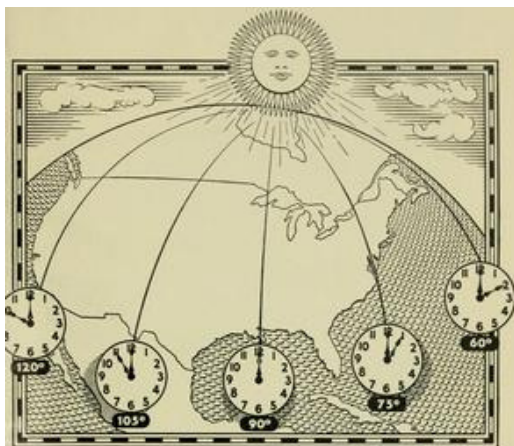
250,000 Viet Nam protestors gather in Washington, DC for the Moratorium March, the largest antiwar rally in U.S. History.

**November 15, 1969**



President Franklin D. Roosevelt communicates with Soviet Premier Maxim Litvinov, resumed diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. that had been suspended since 1919.

**November 9, 1938**



U.S. and Canadian railroads implement the General Time Convention (GTC) time zones across North America. Each railroad station clock was reset as standard-time noon was reached within each time zone.

**November 18, 1883**



President Abraham Lincoln delivers a 2 minute address during the dedication ceremony of the Gettysburg Battlefield National Cemetery. Although many in attendance were at first unimpressed, The Gettysburg Address will come to symbolize the definition of democracy.

**November 19, 1863**