

The Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett - Q&A

1. At such a time as this, share how you discerned your call to this position.

This call felt like a match for me. When I began to lean in and unpack the profile of the candidate published by the agency, I saw a place where my gifts matched the needs of the church. I spent much time in prayer and reflection, asking God to guide, direct and show me that indeed this call was God's call for me. I learned early in life the importance of prayer. My maternal grandmother, who was my spiritual mentor and resident theologian, demonstrated the importance and power of prayer. I learned from her witness and interaction with people that God is real and that, in time, God speaks to those who call upon God. So, I sought to pay attention to what the spirit was revealing to me. Like Gideon who needed confirmation, the truth is I needed confirmation too. I asked for various signs and each sign I asked for was confirmed. And so, by the grace of God, I am confident in this call, and I am excited, humbled and honored to serve the church in this capacity.

2. How has a ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency impacted your life or the lives of your congregation?

Due to the recent tornado that hit in Greensboro, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is currently on the ground in our city. They are providing direction for how to bring faith-based ministries together to prepare for the long-term project of rebuilding neighborhoods impacted by the storm. I am grateful and appreciative of the willingness of the PMA volunteers to come alongside our community at this important time.

Additionally, our congregation, the Saint James Presbyterian Church, partners with PMA through the 1001 Worshiping Communities initiative. Saint James hosts and celebrates the work of Faith Point Fellowship (FPF), a ministry that targets college students and young adults in this area. Our congregation is energized and blessed by the presence of this new worshiping community. Fresh ideas, such as a midnight musical and weekly Soul Food Conversations, inspire our congregation to continue to find creative ways to reach new generations. Participants study contemporary issues and how the Bible speaks to the questions young adults and college students raise.

Finally, some years ago while serving as associate pastor for evangelism, discipleship and ministry at Elmwood Presbyterian Church, I wrote a grant to PMA and received funding that helped expand and strengthen the work and witness of the Elmwood congregation. These funds equipped the Elmwood church to become “one church in two locations.” So, I am personally familiar with the good work of PMA and the positive impact the agency can have in the life of the congregation and community.

3. How do you think the experience you bring to the position — including your work with reconciliation — will guide you in managing the challenges currently facing the Mission Agency?

I consider myself to be a transformational leader who is passionate about people and ministry. In my 30-plus years of serving God’s people, I have experienced the challenges of transforming the culture of churches and community organizations I have served. I have watched God breathe life into places that were arid and dry, and seen those places come alive again. Furthermore, through my participation on boards and community organizations, I am also aware of the significant role of “administrators,” the people whose ministry enables and empowers those in the trenches to thrive and be effective. Experience in both the administration and programmatic aspects of ministry, coupled with my passion for people, will help navigate the dimensions of this call.

Additionally, my work in reconciliation reminds me of the centrality of relationships. God is concerned about relationships, both one’s relationship with God and with other people. Deep and lasting change between people of different races and perspectives does not happen overnight, but over time. Building trustworthy relationships requires patience, persistence and prayerfulness and such will assist in managing the challenges of the Mission Agency.

4. You have extensive experience in building community relationships. What inspires you to do this type of service?

I am inspired by people. People matter. People make a difference because God gives to people certain gifts and skills that are needed in order to positively transform this world. The challenges that impact our society are complex. One church and congregation can do great things, but combined with other churches and community partners, the impact becomes exponential. This is the significance of a connectional system. Community partnerships are key for impacting the lives of those around us, and people make up that partnership.

5. What brings you the most joy in serving?

Seeing people change. Watching communities come alive. Observing the potential of a people or place being actualized by the power of God's Spirit. The church is meant to be a movement. When I see the activity of the movement, and look into the eyes of the people I am privileged to serve and work with, it stirs my soul and makes me want to run on a little bit longer.

6. What are some of your interests outside of the church?

I love to spend time with my four grandchildren. They make me smile. I enjoy playing with them, watching them, listening to them, and I learn so much from them. They teach me what life is really all about. When I need to laugh, or to not take myself so seriously, I take a "grand-mommy break."

I also enjoy the performing arts. In fact, I met my husband, Mondre, while I was playing the role of Charity in the musical *Sweet Charity* being presented by the Oakland Ensemble Theatre. Mondre was rewriting the musical score for the smaller group of musicians who would accompany the Oakland Ensemble cast, and the rest is history. All of our daughters sing, and my oldest daughter, Eustacia, plays the piano. When the girls were growing up our family presented "Moffett Family Concerts" as benefits and fundraisers for various groups. I still enjoy singing with my family when everyone is home.

I am also interested in theater. I have written and performed shows with my daughters and the congregations I serve that focus upon the North Atlantic slave trade and the work presented in my book, *Beyond Greens and Cornbread: Reflections on African American Christian Identity*.