



A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

## CHURCH INFORMATION FORM

The Ministerial Vocation Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are responsible for denominational vocational services. As part of the process of “matching” ministers and congregations, the Office of the Stated Clerk provides resources and advice to both pastors and congregational search committees. To that end, we ask congregations and ministers to complete information forms as an introduction to each other, and a first step in the process of calling a minister for a congregation. For both the pastor and the congregation, this is an opportunity for self-study and evaluation of current ministry and goals. This calls for honesty, effort, and open communication.

This Church Information Form (CIF) presents the local congregation’s history, challenges, and goals. It is our hope that this will help facilitate the search process by assisting both the church in focusing on future directions and applicants in gaining some sense of the nature and uniqueness of this congregation.

We encourage churches to list their vacancies on the Ministry Staff Opportunities webpage at [www.epc.org/mso](http://www.epc.org/mso). For more information or to send your posting, email [info@epc.org](mailto:info@epc.org).

Guidance for church-based human resources questions such as background checks, personnel policy manuals, and more is available at the Office of the General Assembly by contacting Marti Ratcliff at [marti.ratcliff@epc.org](mailto:marti.ratcliff@epc.org) or 407-930-4263.

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Please return completed form to:

Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
ATTN: OFFICE OF THE STATED CLERK  
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510  
Orlando, FL 32822

Phone: 407-930-4239  
Fax: 407-930-4247  
E-mail: [info@epc.org](mailto:info@epc.org)





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**Part 1: Church Information**

1. Church Name Vernal Presbyterian Church

Address 455 McInnis Vernal Rd.

Lucedale, MS 39452

Telephone ( 601 ) 947-8234 Fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail rachaelrossnewman@yahoo.com Website vernalpc.org

2. Presbytery Gulf South

Presbytery Ministerial Committee Liaison Shawn Keating, TE/ Basil Smith RE

3. Search Committee Chairman Mitchell Newman

Address 247 Horseshoe Bend

Lucedale, MS 39452

E-mail mhnewman1@yahoo.com

Telephone ( 601 ) 530-9149

4. List all paid staff positions (use additional sheet if necessary)

- Pastor  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time
- \_\_\_\_\_  Full time  Part time



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5. List all key volunteer positions

- Treasurer
- Adult Sunday School Teacher
- Childrens Sunday School Teachers
- Choir Leader

6. List all vacant positions

Position Available Pastor Date of Vacancy 9/30/2024

Position Available \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Vacancy \_\_\_\_\_

Position Available \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Vacancy \_\_\_\_\_

7. Membership (state approximate numbers and percentages)

	Five years ago	Currently
A. Number of church members	<u>32</u>	<u>29</u>
B. Number of family units	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>
C. Worship attendance	<u>45</u>	<u>35</u>

8. Community Growth  Increasing  Static  Declining

9. Profile of church members

A. Age:

0 % 0-11    10 % 12-18    3 % 19-24    7 % 25-34  
31 % 35-49    10 % 50-64    38 % 65+



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**B. Occupation:**

\_\_\_\_\_ % Business    35 % Professional    \_\_\_\_\_ % Trades  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Agriculture    15 % Stay-at-Home Parent    40 % Retired  
10 % Other (Please Specify) School

**C. Educational level of adults**

\_\_\_\_\_ % some high school    20 % high school    70 % college    10 % graduate school

**D. Percentage of members belonging to the congregation**

Less than one year 5 %  
5 years or less    5 %  
6-10 years    5 %  
10 years or more    85 %

**10. Racial/Ethnic composition of:**

**A. Congregation**

\_\_\_\_\_ % African-American    \_\_\_\_\_ % Asian    100 % Caucasian    \_\_\_\_\_ % Hispanic  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Community (within 5-mile radius of church)**

10 % African-American    \_\_\_\_\_ % Asian    90 % Caucasian    \_\_\_\_\_ % Hispanic  
\_\_\_\_\_ % Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Community Setting (check as many as apply):**

**Location**

Rural     Small Town     Metropolitan     Suburban     Inner City

**Function**

Industrial     Agricultural     Recreational     Military     College/University

Approximate population of community: 13,636





**14. Organizational Structure**

List major boards, committees, and organizations that are part of your church and frequency of meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.)

Name	Purpose of Group	Number of members	Frequency of meetings	Leadership Role*
Women of the Church	Bible Study	10	monthly	3
Children Bible Study	Bible Study	12	weekly	3
Adult Bible Study	Bible Study	7	weekly	1

\*Indicate leadership role expected by using the number below:

1. Pastor takes primary initiative and responsibility.
2. Pastor and laity share responsibility.
3. Laity takes primary initiative and responsibility.
4. A staff person takes primary initiative and responsibility.

**Part 2: Financial/Church Campus Information**

1. Current annual budget: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Last year's annual budget: \$ 80,000  
(Attach a copy of current budget)
2. Percentage of income received toward budget: 100.00 %



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3. Amount contributed for year (most recent complete reporting year)

- A. EPC Percentage of Income \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- B. EPC World Outreach Global Workers \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- C. EPC Special Projects \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Presbytery Per Member Asking/Percentage of Income \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Other Missions/Missionaries \$ \_\_\_\_\_

4. Property owned by church

A. Describe buildings and property (other than manse), including condition.

Our Church building is registered as a national historic building. In our sanctuary, we have pews (220 Capacity) with a choir loft, platform and stainglass windows. We also have 4 Sunday school classrooms, fellowship hall, kitchen, and a memorial prayer garden.

- B. Are your buildings adequate for your present program?  Yes  No  
If no, please explain:

- C. Is a building program or capital project projected?  Yes  No  
If yes, describe what, when, and projected cost

Discussion of expanding sunday school classrooms to accomodate more classes.

- D. Does the church own a manse?  Yes  No

Condition:  Good  Fair  Poor # of Bedrooms

Pastor's Office/Study:  In Church  In Manse  Not Provided

Other \_\_\_\_\_



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5. Compensation:

A. The salary range we are prepared to offer:

Position: Pastor \$ 58,000.00 Total

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. The average annual increase over the past three years is:

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ %

C. Housing

Housing Allowance

Manse Only

Either of the Above

D. Benefits and expenses

\_\_\_\_\_ Retirement Plan (minimum 10% gross effective salary)

\_\_\_\_\_ Medical insurance (EPC medical coverage required for full-time TEs)

\_\_\_\_\_ Life insurance

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Security

\_\_\_\_\_ Travel/mileage

\_\_\_\_\_ Book allowance

\_\_\_\_\_ Study leave allowance (minimum 2 weeks)

\_\_\_\_\_ Annual vacation days (minimum 4 weeks)

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of worship services per year for which pastor is provided relief (in addition to vacation and study leave)

\_\_\_\_\_ Sabbatical frequency and length \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

E. The church participates in the EPC's medical benefits plan  Yes  No

F. The church participates in the EPC's retirement plan  Yes  No





**Part 3: Church Characteristics**

*Check the box that most closely describes the current characteristics of the congregation.*

Our congregation...

Agree

Disagree

- 1. Is spiritually vibrant 1 2 3 4
- 2. Demonstrates love for the pastor and his/her family 1 2 3 4
- 3. Readily shares their gifts with the rest of the congregation 1 2 3 4
- 4. Places a high priority on sound biblical preaching 1 2 3 4
- 5. Effectively integrates newcomers 1 2 3 4
- 6. Is engaged in evangelism 1 2 3 4
- 7. Is often found living their faith in their communities 1 2 3 4
- 8. Has a spirit of unity 1 2 3 4
- 9. Cares about each other 1 2 3 4
- 10. Is supportive of the Session and pastoral leadership 1 2 3 4
- 11. Ministers well to members that are hurting 1 2 3 4
- 12. Uses members' gifts in worship 1 2 3 4
- 13. Contains people willing and able to lead the congregation 1 2 3 4
- 14. Is capable of change when and where appropriate 1 2 3 4
- 15. Is connected to and prayerful about what God is doing in the global church 1 2 3 4

16. How are elders and deacons initially trained and equipped for ministry?

Training provided by EPC.



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17. What is the Session's current practice regarding the ongoing discipleship of elders and deacons?

Training provided by EPC.

18. In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?

For the last 10 years, we have participated in the Community Thanksgiving Service with 10 other Churches. This has always been well attended in the community. Our church is the host every other year. Since our community is a tight knitted christian community, our church building hosts a family reunion which brings in many folks from the community and surrounding areas. Our church is considered an anchor in the community. For our 100th anniversary, the newspaper wrote an article about us entitled, "Steeple of Strength." Lastly, we also host an Easter Sunrise service in our prayer garden which is supported by our community.

19. Describe the strengths of your congregation.

By far, the greatest strength of our congregation is our unity and our love for one another. It only grew tighter through the decision to leave the PCUSA. Everybody helps everybody. We also have a lot of children in our congregation which is encouraging for the future of our church. They bring us a lot of joy.



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20. List specific problems with which your congregation struggles.

Even though the process drew us tighter together, the transition from PCUSA was difficult. For one, we had to say bye to our pastor of 13 years. So, we desire a pastor because we value having a shepherd.

21. List major goals that the congregation has set for itself.

First, we want to glorify God and enjoy him. Second, we want to get a Pastor. Third, we want to educate our next generation in the things of God. Fourth, we want to grow in our missional commitment locally and internationally by involvement and giving financially.

22. Has there ever been disciplinary action taken against a pastor of your congregation?

Yes  No

23. Has there ever been any disciplinary action against an elder or deacon of your congregation?

Yes  No



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If you answered “Yes” to either 22 or 23, please explain.

24. Have you completed a mission statement, vision statement, and/or a strategic plan for your congregation?

Yes     No

If yes, Date completed \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, enter each statement or strategic plan (or attach copies if space below is limited).



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#### **Part 4: Leadership Expectations**

1. What are some key character strengths a person should bring to this position?

The characteristics of a true shepherd that desires God's heart.

Faithful  
Sincere  
Humility  
Patient  
Honesty  
Wise

2. What are five key gifts/skills/abilities a person should bring to this position?

First, we want a pastor who is a good leader and organized. Second, we want a pastor who preaches the Bible exegetically and faithfully. Third, we want a pastor who is friendly and kind who is approachable because we want to strengthen our presence in our community. Fourth, we want a pastor who loves us and who is patient as we seek to be faithful. Fifth, we also want a pastor who values evangelism because we want to be evangelistic in our community. We have a significant opportunity to reach the unchurched.

3. What are the primary pastoral duties for the position? (Attach a position description)

Lead worship on Sundays  
Bible teaching on Sunday and/or Wednesday nights  
Assist/teach children's bible camp  
Moderate session meetings  
Visiting those at home, in the hospital, or home bound  
Representing the congregation at Presbytery and General Assembly and informing the congregation of important topics from each.



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### **Part 5: Church History**

1. What do you consider to be the three most important events in the history of your church?

First, the organization of our church. The Vernal Presbyterian Church was organized on Saturday, February 28, 1880. On Sunday, February 24th, the first worship service was held and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered. Before and after the organization of the church, the people worshipped under an arbor and later in the Vernal Male and Female Academy. The dedication of the first building was held on August 27, 1882. The current building that we worship in was dedicated in 1908.

Second, the decision to leave the PCUSA in 2022 because we no longer wanted our young people raised with the compromised beliefs increasingly being expressed in that denomination..

Third, the decision to seek to join the EPC.

2. What do you consider to be the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?

The most interesting and challenging event would be the process of leaving the PCUSA.



**Part 6: Other Information**

1. List the last three individuals who held this position

Name	Dates of Service	
Rev. H.J. Hedgepeth	1/2003	to 1/2007
Rev. Phillip Williams	1/2009	to 1/2022
Reid Robertson - pulpit supply	9/2023	to 9/2024

2. Describe any significant factors about the church not covered in previous questions.

From November 2001 to 2003, Mr. Bruce Puckett, an elder from Ocean Springs Presbyterian Church, filled our pulpit. On communion Sundays, Dr. Rev. Bob Wilson, a pastor from Ocean Springs Presbyterian Church, came to administer communion. During this time the rotation of officers began and the first lady officers were elected, ordained and installed.

From October of 2022 to September 2023 elders from Mobile, Laurel, Pascagoula, and Ocean Springs filled our pulpit until Mr. Reid Robetson accepted the position of pulpit supply.



### Statement of Acknowledgment

The EPC believes that honesty and a commitment to open communication are critical to building the body of Christ. In that spirit, please confirm your agreement to the following statements by your signatures below.

1. We attest that the information contained in this Church Information Form is true and complete to the best of our knowledge.
2. We authorize applicants for the position(s) listed herein to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in this Church Information Form.
3. We authorize the Office of the Stated Clerk to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share this Church Information Form with potential candidates for the position(s) listed herein.
4. We acknowledge the Medical Plan and Retirement Plan services offered by the EPC's Benefit Resources, Inc., exist to serve EPC churches and their staff members. We also acknowledge the EPC's Book of Order requirement that EPC churches provide medical insurance to ordained staff members through BRI as mandated by the following Acts of the General Assembly:
  - 81-04 Terms of call for any minister of member churches shall provide for participation in the denominational hospitalization and disabilities programs. (*Minutes of the 1st General Assembly, 1-32*)
  - 81-06 The denominational group insurance plan providing health, disability, and life coverage shall be mandatory for all ministers within member churches. (*Minutes of the 1st General Assembly, 1-36*)
  - 88-08 Assembly amends participatory requirements for group health insurance plan by requiring participation of all ministers on the rolls of presbyteries with the exception of:
    1. Missionaries laboring in cooperative agreements with mission agencies;
    2. Ministers laboring in institutional agencies providing their own group insurance plan;
    3. Ministers afforded group insurance coverage as part of retirement benefits from a previous employer;
    4. Ministers without call, and ministers laboring less than 20 hours in a place of ministry. (*Minutes of the 8th General Assembly, 8-24*)

For information about EPC benefits through BRI, see [www.epc.org/benefits](http://www.epc.org/benefits), email [benefits@epc.org](mailto:benefits@epc.org), or call 407-930-4267.

Clerk of Session Frances Forsyth Date 7/18/2024

Search Committee Chair Mitchell Newman Date 7/18/2024