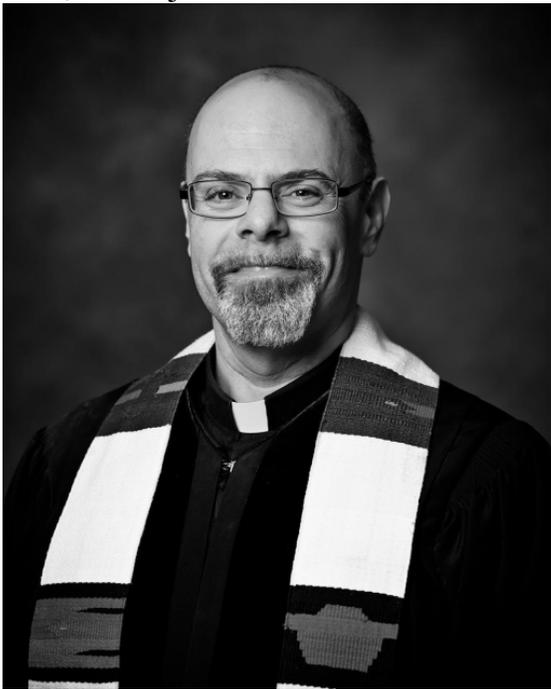


## **Reverend John Napoli to Lead UPC**

The Pastor Nominating Committee and Session of United Presbyterian Church are happy to announce that we will welcome the Reverend John J. Napoli III as its new pastor at its 10 a.m. service Sunday, Oct. 23.

It is the first such service for us in almost 25 years. Reverend Napoli becomes the 20<sup>th</sup> pastor called into full-time ministry of a church that has 183-year roots in Bloomington. The usual Sunday morning service, with Rev. Napoli's first sermon as pastor, will be followed by a pitch-in luncheon. A sign-up sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall. The service and lunch are open to attendance by neighborhood and community as well as UPC's membership.

Rev. Napoli succeeds the late Rev. David Bremer, who retired in 2013 after serving as UPC's minister for 21 years. His was the longest tenure since UPC was formed just after the Civil War, in conjunction with national denominational mergers. For the past 2½ years, the church has been led by interim pastor Mitchell J. Coggin.



Rev. Napoli comes to UPC from Macon, GA., where he has served as pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church since 2008. His first solo pastorate began in 2005 at First Presbyterian Church in DeFuniak Springs, FL. He received a master of divinity degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in 2005 and was ordained that year. He also holds degrees in biblical studies from Trinity College and history from the University of South Florida.

UPC's Pastor Nominating Committee screened approximately 50 applicants over the past year and chose to call Rev. Napoli. On Sunday, July 21, the Rev. Napoli and wife Sarah were introduced to the congregation, he preached his first sermon from the UPC pulpit, and afterward in a formal congregational vote, his hiring received unanimous approval.

Rev. Napoli's description of the ministry to which God is calling him said, "I hope that following my call God will lead me to a church that is warm, open and inclusive, vibrant, active, hard-working and passionate about social justice. I feel that relationships between generations are important and should be fostered in a church community. I am a seeker of knowledge and hope to find myself in a church full of critical thinkers that hunger for theological discussion as well as fellowship around a potluck."

That is in his new church's DNA. UPC and Bloomington Presbyterianism have links to abolitionism when that was neither the law nor the majority spirit of the land. Historian Katherine Roberts traced Bloomington UPC's roots to "a group of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who migrated primarily from Chester County, South Carolina, to settle in early Bloomington. They came in protest to slavery ... The greater part of this migration was complete by 1834 ... divided into three groups: Reformed Presbyterians, or Covenanters; Associate Presbyterians, or Seceders; and, thanks to a union of most members of these two groups in 1782, the Associate Reformed Presbyterians." IU history professor James A. Woodburn, a UPC member, said in a 1910 paper "key members of these groups migrated together, intermarried, helped

transform the economic fabric of the community, were active in the formation of Indiana University, and were anti-slavery in spirit.”

In 1833, sixteen persons participated in the charter meeting for the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in downtown Bloomington.

In 1855, the Rev. John Bryan was brought in as pastor from Pennsylvania, the last before the national church merger that formed UPC in 1868. It was a momentous hiring for Bloomington and IU. His son, William Lowe Bryan, is the only Bloomington native to serve as IU’s president and his term (1902-1937) is the longest by any IU president. He was a lifelong UPC member, a patriarch of the stately downtown church built in 1872 at 9<sup>th</sup> Street and College. After the 1951 fire that consumed that building, 91-year-old Bryan and his 100-year-old sister, Mary (Phillips), turned the first shovels of dirt at groundbreaking ceremonies for the present UPC building.

The church of Bryan and Woodburn established a long and storied history of reaching out to all nationalities and ethnicities. Though small, UPC today has members from four continents and has a goal of even more diversity in a declared mission “To be a voice of love, hope and compassion by living the teachings of Jesus Christ, sharing our faith and reaching out to all people.”

## Welcome Pitch-In!

A pitch-in lunch following Reverend Napoli’s inaugural sermon

Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>



*Welcome*

Reverend John Napoli and Sarah Napoli!



Beverages and utensils will be provided by UPC and the Deacons.  
Please bring salads, entrees, side dishes and desserts to share.



Sign-Up in Fellowship Hall!

