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A Matter of Faith

a conversation with Pastor Seth Yi
Newberry Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

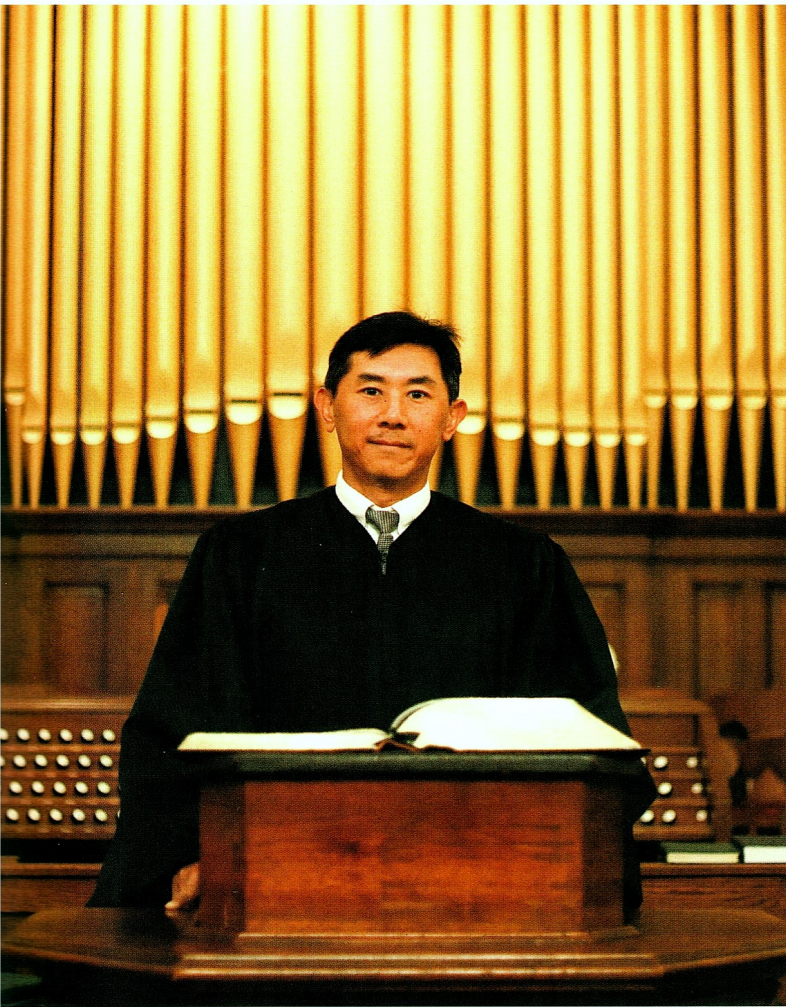
At what point in your life did you know you wanted to be a pastor? How did this calling come about?

Growing up the first six years of my life in South Korea, our family did not practice any religion. Within a year of living in the United States (1977), our family was introduced to Christianity through a friend of our parents in Durham, NC. However, it was not until my senior year in high school that the Lord graciously drew me to Himself, and I began to grow in my personal relationship with Christ! Immediately, the Lord gave me a hunger to study the Bible and serve Him joyfully. During my years at North Carolina State University (1987-1991), I was actively involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and my local church in various leadership roles. During my senior year, my desire to pursue full-time vocational ministry was confirmed by my pastor and other leaders, so I entered seminary upon graduation. It was

during my time in seminary as well as attending First Presbyterian Church (ARP) of Columbia, SC, that the Lord clarified my call to the pastorate. As I served on the staff of First Presbyterian Church for five years after graduating from Columbia Biblical Seminary, my desire to shepherd God's flock was clarified and eventually confirmed. In 2000, I was ordained as a minister of the gospel in the ARP Church to serve as a mission developer in Lexington, SC. Over the past two decades, the Lord has deepened my love in serving Him, His people, and the lost with the glorious truths of His Word.

Tell me about Newberry ARP Church and what makes it special?

The only thing that makes Newberry ARP Church special is that she is a congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ! We are by



Can you speak to how church (as an institution) has changed over the years? How has it stayed the same?

I believe that the church in the US has undergone some seismic shifts over the past 50 years and especially in the past 15 years. Jesus has called His people to be the salt and light of the earth (Matt 5:13-16). The only effective and necessary way the church can accomplish this calling is to be in the world but not of it (John 12:11-19). Unfortunately, in an effort to fit into our ever-changing culture and its ethics, the church has increasingly lost her flavor and luminescence by denying her “specialness,” namely being called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9). As the church seeks to be relevant to the culture, she has increasingly veered away from the biblical truths and priorities that the Lord blesses. As vitally important as it is for the church to be relevant to our culture, she must remain faithful to the historic, truly timeless principles of the Bible. Both the ends and the means must conform to the authority of God’s Word if the church wants to honor Him. The result and the cause of this critical change has been an overall loss of biblical literacy in the church.

On a positive note, the church continues to be a vital community for people who are seeking support and encouragement in the faith. The regular fellowship of saints is unique to what the church alone provides. There are many civic organizations and clubs that unite people for various causes and interests, but the church alone remains as a corporate body, by God’s design and purpose, where He personally dwells amongst His people. Whether it is in weekly corporate worship, Bible studies, or small groups, the church who seeks to honor the Lord will be blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in and among God’s people. The faithful church will alone be the source of such spiritual and loving fellowship.

God’s grace a local, visible expression of the Bride of Christ, a people for whom Christ died and was raised from the dead. Our “specialness” is wholly and solely rooted in reflecting the glory of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we endeavor in all that we do to honor the Lord by being faithful to the Scriptures as our supreme authority. We prayerfully and humbly seek to be a God-honoring, Christ-exalting, Bible-saturated, Holy Spirit-led, congregation who loves the Lord and our neighbor as ourselves as much as possible. Though we fail in many ways to fulfill this unique calling, we strive to live out the gospel in worshipping and serving the Lord.

What is the history of Newberry ARP?

This congregation is tied to two historic churches in Newberry County, King’s Creek and Cannon’s Creek, which during the 1770s were formed by Scots-Irish immigrants. Newberry ARP was organized in 1850 as the Thompson Street ARP Church (currently Lindsay Street) to provide the citizens in the city of Newberry with an ARP ministry. In 1853, they united with King’s Creek ARP (dissolved in 1964) to call their first minister, Rev. Henry L. Murphy. The original sanctuary on Thompson Street was built in 1855 but was burned in the Great Fire of 1907 (March 29). Through the heroic efforts of Mrs. D. M. Ward and Mrs. Henrietta Blease, the pulpit, two pulpit chairs, and a Communion table were saved. On Feb 2, 1902, the session (the board of elders) decided to change the name of the church to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Newberry. The current sanctuary on the corner of Main and Calhoun Streets was built in 1908. The Young Peoples Society raised funds to purchase the lot for the present sanctuary. The manse (pastor’s home adjacent to the sanctuary on Calhoun Street) was built in 1919. After the tornado of 1984 (March 28), the lot on Main Street was purchased and converted into the current parking lot.





Outside of Sunday worship services, tell me about the organizations and service opportunities at Newberry ARP?

We seek to encourage our people in nurturing their faith through learning the truths of God and deepening relationships with one another in the Lord. Our elders believe that as Christ's disciples grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord they will be better equipped and motivated to use their gifts and talents to serve Him and their neighbors (Eph 4:11-12). Service should be a hallmark of every Christian who is being conformed more and more into the likeness of the greatest Servant who ever lived and died for others, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we offer several opportunities for both fellowship and Bible study: Sunday school, Men's Bible Study, Community Bible Study, Women's Circle, and fellowship meals. These gatherings are designed to deepen our understanding of God's Word within the context of a loving community. The Lord intends for His people to grow spiritually and relationally so that we can be effective witnesses. We pray for one another as we come together by sharing needs and seeking opportunities to meet practical needs as they arise in our lives. We aim to be a church family that looks for opportunities to serve one another with the love of Christ.

What type of outreach is Newberry ARP involved with?

As a member-congregation of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, we partner with our denomination in international and national missions. We provide missionaries with financial and prayer support who are serving abroad seeking to proclaim the gospel and establish local congregations. In the US, we partner with mission developers who are planting churches where gospel churches are needed the most. Locally, we have partnered with various ministries to share the love of Christ in unique ways. These ministries include LifeBridge, the Gideons, and the Boys Farm. More importantly, we equip every member with the Word of God to be a "missionary" in their unique sphere of influence each and every day of their lives using the gifts and talents that have been graced to them.

What is the most important thing for people to know about Newberry ARP?

Newberry ARP Church exists to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

First and foremost, we seek to fulfill this end by gathering weekly on the Lord's Day and offering Him authentic, joyful, soul-satisfying worship that is biblically rich and orderly. We desire to honor our Triune God by adoring Him in the beauty of holiness. As we come together as God's people, as needy sinners, we anticipate being met by the Lord through the songs, prayers, confession of faith, Scripture readings, and the exposition of His Holy Word. The corporate worship of Newberry ARP is the hub from which all our Christian life extends. As we worship God biblically, our lives will gradually reflect Him accordingly. As the Bible teaches, we become like what we worship.

Being a pastor/minister can be a heavy job sometimes. When you're not at work, what do you do to emotionally lighten your load?

I enjoy spending time with my family. The Lord lovingly uses them to remind me who I truly am, what truly matters, and what my limitations are. I have been blessed with a loving and caring wife, Allison (married 29 years), and we have been blessed with six wonderful children (ranging from 27 to 17 years old). We enjoy seeing them on a regular basis since all but one of them live within 50 minutes of us. To maintain my physical health, I enjoy playing tennis and more recently pickleball. I also enjoy cooking and sharing the labors of my hands with friends and family as we practice hospitality. We both value and nurture relationships. I can honestly say that I find great joy and satisfaction in serving the Lord as a pastor, not just as a job but as a calling, even with the various challenges that come along with it. Communing with Him daily in prayer and in His Word allows me to keep all the challenges of ministry in their proper perspective so that I do not become overwhelmed with cares that are securely in His hands.

Is there anything you'd like to add?

We welcome anyone to worship with us on Sunday mornings at 10:55 AM on the corner of Main and Calhoun Streets. We would love to meet you and help you in any way to grow in your relationship with Christ. To find out more about our church, please visit our website, NewberryARP.org. May the Lord be gracious in drawing you to Himself! 🙏