

The Pastor Nominating Committee Enthusiastically Introduces

The Reverend Jessica Rigel

Candidate for Pastor and Head of Staff of Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church

February 1, 2026

THE CANDIDATE

Jessica Rigel

Ordination Date

10/21/2018

Ecclesiastical Status

PC(USA) Minister of Word & Sacrament

Formal Education

Master of Divinity - Princeton Theological Seminary (September 2014 - May 2018)

Master of Arts in Christian Education - Princeton Theological Seminary (September 2014 - May 2018)

Bachelor of Arts in English & Religion - University of Mary Washington (August 2002 - May 2007)

Training/Certification

Associate Pastor for Discipleship - Alamance Presbyterian Church, 2018-present

Salem Presbytery Peace & Justice Task Force (Co-Chair & Facilitator), 2020-present

Comfort Zone Camp (Big Buddy & Regional Advisory Council), 2023-present

Secondary Teaching Certification (Grades 6-12) - State of Arizona, 2011-current

Transitional Ministry Training - Level 1, 2025

Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising - Lake Institute on Faith and Giving, 2024

Suicide Prevention Workshop - Soul Shop, 2023

Spiritual Direction Certification - Phoenix Center for Spiritual Direction, 2022-present

Prepare/Enrich Facilitator, 2020

Clinical Pastoral Education Training - Princeton Theological Seminary, 2017

Teaching Assistant, Orientation to Old Testament - Princeton, 2016 & 2017

Editorial Assistant for Dr. Jacqueline Lapsley: Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life: A New Conversation, 2017

UN Commission on the Status of Women - NYC, 2016

Young Adult Ministry Intern - First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, TN, 2016

College Chaplaincy Corps Intern - Christ United Methodist Church, 2015-2016

Language Arts Teacher - Benson Middle School, 2011-2013

Young Adult Volunteer, PC(USA) - Presbytery of S. Louisiana, 2013-2014

Montreat Camp & Conference Center - Keynote Speaker, Leadership Team, Workshop Presenter, multiple dates

General Assembly PC(USA) - Theological Student Advisory Delegate, Racial/Ethnic

Leadership Development Advocate, Youth Advisory Delegate, multiple dates

International experience in Puerto Rico, Rwanda, Greece, Turkey, Brazil, Ghana, Mexico and India

THE CANDIDATE - REVEREND JESSICA RIGEL



MISSION STUDY PROCESS

When it came time to appoint a Mission Study Team, the session decided that in addition to being an active church member, everyone who served should be able to: work as part of a team, listen to differing viewpoints, voice a minority opinion, follow through on commitments, and put congregational needs above individual preferences. Somewhere on the team, the following gifts/skills needed to be represented: computer/research skills, organizational skills, writing skills, hospitality.

As much as possible, we sought to be representative in terms of: age, gender, ethnicity, family configuration, length of membership, areas of ministry involvement, and relationship to Warren Wilson College, where our sanctuary is located.

The session appointed the following persons to the team: Sally Broughton, Don Collins, Natalie Daugherty, Barbara Griswold, Pat Levi, Sharon Lytle, Ken Murchison, and Brent Roberts (Chair).

The team gathered for the first time on March 16, 2024, under the leadership of Margaret LaMotte Torrence, our Transitional Pastor.

THOUGHTS FROM THE PNC, PRESBYTERY AND COLLEAGUES

With the assistance of the Presbytery of WNC we, the PNC, were able to define what WWPC was seeking in a pastor. Among the several candidates it was clear that Jessica met the expectations and was clearly a wonderful find for WWPC.

Brent Roberts

We developed a long list of strengths and traits important to WWPC at this point in time; Jessica checked all the boxes, and rose to the top of a pool of over 70 candidates. We are blessed to have found her.

Chrisann Ohler

Give God the glory and praise...Hallelujah and can I say AMEN! With grace and thanksgiving,

Rodney Lytle

From the first time I read her information on CLC, I knew that she would be the best person to become our new pastor! She has a lot of experience and exudes joy in all that she does. I Love her sermons and her warmth. I feel blessed that she will be our new minister.

Elizabeth Cook

I was really thrilled to meet Jessica as part of the nomination process. She's filled with a wealth of wisdom and has such a strong gift for connecting with youth.

Natalie Daugherty

Pastor Jess has insight and inquisitiveness about church and community, as well as an approachable ease. I look forward to being her presbytery colleague and a sister in ministry!

Rev. Laurie Furr - Vancini

My heart feels so glad at this choice. Congratulations on work well done (and well begun). Thanks be to God.

Rev. Margaret LaMotte Torrence
Exam Team Presbytery of WNC

Approve??? We are delighted... What a blessing she will be!!!

Revs. George & Beverly Thompson
Presbytery of WNC

Jessica is a dynamic and gifted teacher; she makes the message of the gospel relevant.

She was a most wonderful memorable student - among the top 5 to 7 students I have encountered in my entire career (as Dean and President of two separate seminaries).

She is one of the most powerful and impactful people in the Salem Presbytery.

She makes people feel at ease and feel heard.

She wrote the policy for the Peace & Justice Task Force, developed the curriculum, and teaches it to pastors.

She ministers to the ministers.

She knows how people learn.

She is a person of tremendous character, demonstrates exceptional relational skills, and has a heart for youth.

Jessica is a total rockstar.

She doubled our youth program in 8 months.

We will be devastated to lose her.

She is punctual and responsible, ethical and trustworthy, and good at detail and organization.

Yes, yes, yes.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Our God is one – the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all, who remains ever present with creation, refusing to abandon it. God relishes beauty, and embodies grace, forgiveness, and absolute love. Jesus Christ, God's son yet God's self, emerged from Mary's womb fully human while remaining fully Divine. This Jesus loved, laughed, healed, suffered, died, and had the audacity to return from the dead through the power of God to demonstrate His love for humanity. I trust in the Holy Spirit, and I live in awe of the way I glimpse the Spirit working through lives, including my own. I believe that the Spirit is not always gentle, but is persistent, committed to enriching lives to find the wholeness, fulfillment, and peace of Christ and to become reflections of God's grace.

I believe that the created order reflects God's glory and is worthy of reverence. Humanity is a part of this good creation, and we were made with a natural curiosity and awareness, but with a limited attention span and memory. We are both forgetful and willful, and this reality can make us cruel, destructive and selfish. We are culpable for these actions and attitudes, and the consequence is a self-imposed distance from the Divine.

I believe in the authority of Scripture, which serves as a witness to God's great love. Scripture reflects the intended relationship between God and the created order, and it revolves around human stories as a means of helping believers understand, grow and persevere in their relationship with the Divine. Through studying and struggling with these writings, we can become more faithful to living in the ways of Christ, whose commitment to prayer, presence, and service is embodied throughout the Gospels. To be a disciple of Christ is to submit to such spiritual practices with a grateful heart.

I believe that the sacraments manifest the grace of God through their focus on our unity and humility before Christ in worship. In baptism and communion, communities of faith engage Christ's power through dying to their own sin and being resurrected to a relationship with Him rooted in sustenance and fellowship. By practicing these sacraments, believers experience God's healing presence in our daily lives and recommit ourselves to the kingdom vision of the beloved community.

I believe Christ came to save the world, and that He endows His followers with the desire and the power to share His grace. I believe that though humanity can distance itself from God, it can never be separated from God. In spite of our sin, believers receive glimpses of how God's kingdom is at work in the world and how we can share in kingdom building, through which we define our lives and experience hope.

Our Triune God redeemed the world and continues to redeem it through abounding grace. When we open our hearts to welcome the Holy Spirit, we are transformed and empowered to walk beside all who suffer. Through grace, we become Christ's hands and feet in the world until He comes again.

Rev. Jessica Rigel