

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SERVICE

Gardner-Webb Alumnus Selected as VP and University Chaplain for Christian Life and Service

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Dr. Josh Parrott, of South Carolina, Has Over Two Decades of Experience as Pastor and Professor



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University President Dr. William Downs has announced that Gardner-Webb alumnus, Dr. Josh Parrott, will serve as the new Vice President and University Chaplain for Christian Life and Service. Selected after a national search by a committee representing the Gardner-Webb community, Parrott will begin on Feb. 15.

The Christian life of the University is a priority for Downs, who elevated the Vice President position to cabinet-level in 2019. As a member of the President's cabinet, Parrott will report directly to Downs.

"I'm so very pleased to appoint Dr. Parrott to this incredibly important position at our University, and we are eager to welcome him back to his alma mater in February," praised Downs. "Josh knows and

loves Gardner-Webb, he understands the myriad opportunities and challenges of Christian higher education, and he is fully committed to ministering to students from diverse backgrounds. Everyone who meets Josh will quickly realize that his approach is positive and optimistic, that his energy level is sky high, and that he will be both visible and engaged in advancing GWU's mission."

For Parrott, who currently lives in Eutawville, S.C., accepting the position is like "coming home." He noted, "I am proud to have earned my religious studies degree from Gardner-Webb in 2003, and I am grateful for my professors who stirred within me a love for learning. My love for this University and my love for campus ministry began in the Fall of 1999. As a freshman, I was involved in off-campus ministries to the local nursing home and homeless shelter, and it was through these ministries that I met Brantley, my wife."

Since leaving the University to pursue his graduate degrees and 21-year ministry in the church and higher education, Parrott and his wife have continued to support their alma mater. They have attended homecoming, drove to basketball games at UNC and Duke and cheered together in 2019 at the GWU men's basketball team's NCAA Tournament appearance in Columbia, S.C.

Parrott said as he begins his new role at Gardner-Webb, he will work closely with the ministers in the Office of Christian Life and Service to continue providing strong spiritual care for all members of the campus community. "We want to offer a ministry of presence, build caring relationships with our faculty, staff, and students, and proclaim the excellencies of God all along the way," he affirmed. "Our task will be to 'honor Christ the Lord as holy' (1 Peter 4:15), and make sure that in all things 'God is glorified' (1 Peter 5:11). I would like to thank President Downs and each member of the search committee for their time and diligence during this process."



Parrott received his Master of Divinity in pastoral ministry with biblical languages notation in 2006 from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He earned his Master of Theology in biblical studies with a concentration in New Testament in 2007, also from Southeastern. His thesis was on "The Gospel of Luke, the Kingdom of God, and Those of Low Status in Society: An Analysis of a Special Lukan Motif." In 2020, he graduated from Liberty University School of Divinity in Lynchburg, Va., with a Doctor of Philosophy in theology and apologetics with a concentration in biblical studies. His

dissertation was titled “Positive and Negative Uses of the Exodus Motif in Biblical Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature.”

From 2007 to 2020, Parrott was associate professor of religion at Louisburg College, a private school in North Carolina. He taught Old Testament, New Testament, World Religions, Religion in America, The Bible Yesterday and Today, Philosophy, Public Speaking, Reading, and College Success Seminar. He was responsible for promoting biblical and spiritual growth, character development and critical thinking at this faith-based institution.

In addition to teaching a full-time course load, he served as the chaplain for the men’s basketball team. He shared his faith with the team, led them in Bible study, and emphasized the importance of faith, character, and integrity in their lives. He also served on the Spiritual Life Leadership Team with other faculty, the college chaplain, and several students. The team worked collaboratively to improve the overall spiritual health and wellness of the college community. Additionally, Parrott was honored to preach in the college chapel service on numerous occasions and to deliver the invocation and benediction at multiple commencement ceremonies.

In July 2020, Parrott became a certified chaplain with Corporate Chaplains of America. In this role, he provided chaplaincy in the workplace and sought to build caring relationships with the hope of sharing the gospel. He has also served as the pastor of First Baptist Church of Eutawville. Before moving to South Carolina, he was pastor of White Level Baptist Church in Louisburg. While there, the church had an exciting time of discipleship and built a new fellowship hall without going into debt. Many of the college students attended the church each week.

Search committee members:

Dr. William M. Downs, President

Dr. Robert Canoy, Dean of the M. Christopher White School of Divinity

Dr. Nicole Waters, Dean of the College of Health Sciences

Dr. Paula Qualls, Professor of Religious Studies

Rev. Dr. M. Lamont Littlejohn, GWU Trustee, Adjunct Faculty in School of Divinity, alumnus, and pastor

Aaron Hinton, Associate Vice President for Advancement

Alex Simmons, Women’s Basketball Head Coach

Bailey Ashe, Undergraduate Student

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre

campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](https://gardner-webb.edu/) (<https://gardner-webb.edu/>).