

## **Reverend Janice Yvonne Cook**

### **Candidate for Executive Associate Pastor The Village Community Presbyterian Church**



At eleven years old, while living in Brawley, California, I first sensed my call to ministry. The story of Christ's expansive love and deep sacrifice touched me deeply, igniting a passion to dedicate my life to sharing that message with those seeking love and belonging. Though the journey has been wild and bumpy, God's presence has instilled in me unwavering perseverance and trust in the seed so lovingly planted.

I was first ordained in the Disciples of Christ Denomination in 1978. During the next twenty years I found myself drawn to immense spiritual and theological growth through my studies and experiences within the reformed framework. I was ordained into the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America in 1998 and have served this denomination for the past 30 years.

In 2019, I embraced the opportunity to enroll in the Transitional Pastors Network and began my journey in Transitional training through the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. At that time, I had served as the Senior Associate at San Marino Community Presbyterian Church since 2015. I felt driven by a desire to equip myself to support the church through transition and change. The Christian landscape has been evolving over the past twenty years, but the arrival of COVID-19 unleashed a wave of unexpected and daunting challenges which forced us to pivot and change in a matter of days. It felt serendipitous that I was preparing myself to serve God's beloved community amidst such profound upheaval.

In 2021, I made the heartfelt decision to officially retire and return to San Diego to be closer to my children and their families. This move marked a profound professional homecoming for me, as I had dedicated the first 30 years of my ordained ministry to serving the church in various capacities within the San Diego Presbytery. I had the honor of serving in three remarkable congregations: as the Director of Children's Ministry at Solana Beach for seven years, as the Director of Family Life Ministries at Rancho Bernardo for ten years, and as the Associate Pastor at La Costa for ten years. Additionally, I served as a hospice-trauma chaplain with the Sharp Medical System for two years before moving to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, to fulfill my role as the Associate Pastor for Congregational Care and Discipleship. Throughout my journey, I have been blessed with wise colleagues and cherished friendships across the country, yet none have roots as deep as those I hold in San Diego.

Even though I had retired I sought a way to continue to serve Christ through service to the church and was blessed to be invited to join the staff at The Village Church. One of the most profound gifts of this interim experience has been the refreshing energy I've discovered for the challenging yet deeply rewarding work of parish ministry. I am filled with excitement and hope as I envision the path that God is paving for both the universal church and this beloved congregation.

As we approach significant changes, I feel truly blessed to work alongside visionary leaders committed to the church's future. When I first arrived at the Village Church, I had no intention of seeking a permanent position. I hold a deep respect for our processes and have great faith in our polity and the wisdom of our committees. Yet, this renewed sense of service, love for this congregation, and the knowledge that we are facing pivotal shifts inspires me to believe I can make a meaningful impact in this next season of our shared journey. There is important work that lies ahead of the Village Church in preparing for the future and I am excited to continue to help this wonderful congregation discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit in manifesting God's will in our life together.