



Sophie Marian Draffin

Associate Pastor of Youth & Mission



Accomplishments and Biography of Sophie Marian Draffin

Sophie is a native of Durham, North Carolina where she grew up in Westminster Presbyterian Church. It was during her time as a youth at Westminster, that she discerned God's calling for her to serve in ministry and specifically, youth and family ministry. Sophie's Youth Pastor was very prominent in her life and was an inspiration for her to accept God's call to ministry.

Sophie graduated from the University of Richmond, Richmond, VA with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Rhetoric and Communication Studies. Her minor studies were Spanish and Religion. After her graduation, she made a trek across the United States to attend Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. While at Fuller, Sophie obtained her Masters of Divinity with a concentration in Youth, Family, and Culture.

While attending Fuller Theological Seminary, Sophie was employed as an Administrative Assistant in the Office of Presbyterian Ministries, Seminary Intern for Youth and Pastoral Care at San Marino Community Church, and was a teaching assistant for Dr. Chapman (Chap) Clark, a widely recognized authority in the areas of Youth Ministry, Family Ministry, and Youth Outreach and Evangelism.

Most recently in July of 2007, Sophie was named as an Adjunct Instructor at Fuller for Youth Outreach and Evangelism. She has experience in other services which all involved youth ministries, outreach, evangelism and pastoral care.

Sophie came to our nominating committee by a self-referral which means that she sought out FPCA. In her cover letter, she noted that she was interested in our position for two reasons. First, was the position description of Associate Pastor of Youth & Mission. Her passion is for youth, young adults, and their families. This passion has been confirmed and strengthened during her time in seminary as she worked in the youth ministries department at San Marino Community Church, a PC(USA) church, and as a teaching assistant and adjunct instructor at Fuller. Secondly, she strongly connects with our church mission statement (see front cover of your bulletin). She would love to serve in a church community that is interested in worshipping and fellowshiping together regularly, and reaching out beyond the walls of the church to those in the community who not know Christ.

She wants to serve in a church that is whole heartedly committed to serving the Lord and furthering the work of God in the world and is also a church committed to community and prayer. Community is a natural part of who Sophie is. She wants to be in a community that recognizes the importance of church family; community to her involves more than gathering together once a week for a meal. It means individuals committed to walking the journey of faith together and praying for one another and also entails studying, learning and growing together in relation to God.

There are three words that could describe Sophie's leadership style: service, relationships, and authenticity. She says that first and foremost, she is called to serve God. One of the primary ways she can accomplish this is by service to her congregation and community.

Second in her leadership style is being relational. Like our Head of Staff, Rob McClelland, Sophie believes in meeting people where they are, listen to their stories, and build a trusting, caring relationship with them and empowering them to have a passion to do the work of God.

The third and most significant characteristic of her leadership style is authenticity. She brings a heart that has experienced pain and sorrow but also joy and love. She leads out of who she is. When she leads, she brings joy, energy, passion, and enthusiasm. The members of the APNC can attest to this, as we believe she was the first candidate in FPCA history to go rock climbing on her first in person interview.

Sophie believes that a strong youth, young adult, and young family ministry should not be fragmented. She notes that in many churches a youth ministry program has become its own entity. The problem is not in the programs, but in that the church as a whole is never gathering together as a community across generations. The church is called by God to function as a body; all the different parts must work together. One of Sophie's main goals is to have the youth in her ministry have at least five congregational members (not relatives) who the youth can call at any time, talk about anything, use as a partner in their faith journey.

She loves bringing people together, and helping to make connections. She enjoys organizing events, but even more she loves one-on-one mentoring. She loves to encourage others in their journeys, by walking alongside of them, praying for them, and empowering them to follow the calls God has placed on their lives. She has experienced the power of prayer and particularly with the Houston Presbyterian Cursillo community. Presbyterian Cursillo is a purposefully designed method for renewing the faith of individuals and, through the individuals, the environments in which they live and work. Cursillo" (pronounced Kur-see-yo) means a short course in living the Christian faith and is designed to provide a framework for the development of Christians in the local church and in the world. A Cursillo is a three-day retreat weekend with activities that provide an opportunity for the participants to discover a new and exciting relationship with Christ and to encourage them to then take that newfound relationship back to their home, work and church environments. The entire community is centered on prayer, and speaks to the need to pray with and for one another. She believes that a church that relies on prayer is a church that believes in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide. She has become very dedicated to prayer, privately, in one-on-one settings, and corporately; this will follow her into her ministry.

Her love of relationships and enthusiasm is evidenced in her personal life. Sophie has a brother, Andy, a former Washington DC Police Officer, a mother, Claudia, who is the most loving person to all people and sees good in everyone, and her father Richard Marion Draffin, who she characterizes as humble, nurturing, and supporting. Richard is an MD at Duke Hospital and an avid Duke supporter. She has friends from seminary who she dearly loves and a second set of "adopted" parents who live in San Antonio, Texas. Sophie is a member of the Company of New Pastors program, and also participates in the Cursillo program annually.

In her free time, Sophie enjoys an active lifestyle and loves being outdoors. She enjoys running, riding bikes, and has also been rumored to be a fierce competitor on the soccer and flag football field.

Sophie has passed her ordination exams for Grace Presbytery with a unanimous vote from the Examinations Committee. Her expected employment at FPCA will begin in June. She will be ordained in her home church in Durham, NC later in the summer, then come back to Arlington to be installed as Associate Pastor of Youth & Mission. Sophie will be employed and working on staff prior to being ordained and installed later this summer.

Please pray for Sophie as she makes this significant move across the country (again), and accepts Gods calling here at FPCA. Please continue to be a loving, welcoming, and supporting congregation of Christ for Sophie Marian Draffin.

Yours In Christ,

FPCA Associate Pastor Nominating Committee

Bryan Huggins
Lucia Bitnar
Suzie McCoy
J. Fred Miller
Jack Snowden
Jennifer Schwettmann