

# Biography

## **The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II**

### **Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II serves as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the largest Reformed denomination in the United States. He was elected at the 222nd General Assembly (2016) in Portland, Oregon.

The son, grandson, and nephew of Presbyterian pastors, Nelson is the first African American to lead the denomination, which has a 300-year history in the U.S. As Stated Clerk, his duties include interpreting assembly actions, representing the church on various denominational and ecumenical councils, witnessing on behalf of the church to social justice issues, and making statements as directed by an assembly.

Prior to becoming Stated Clerk, Nelson served as director of the PC(USA)'s Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C. His service to the denomination also includes calls as pastor of St. James Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, North Carolina, and organizing pastor of Liberation Community Church in Memphis, Tennessee.

As an extension to his ministry in the PC(USA), Nelson served as associate director of the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis. As a consultant, he provided staff development training for teacher specialists, curriculum specialists, and principal leaders who provide assistance for low-performing schools.

Nelson holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; a Master of Divinity degree from Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary; and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science/Urban Studies from Johnson C. Smith University.

He is a featured conference preacher and writer and serves on various boards and professional organizations. His international travel includes trips to South Africa, Geneva, Switzerland, Montego Bay, Jamaica, and Havana, Cuba, on behalf of the PC(USA).

Nelson is married to the Reverend Gail Porter Nelson, and they have one adult daughter, Alycia Yvette Nelson.