

## In Nikki's Words...

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the First on Fifth community in the role of Interim Minister for Missions. In the time that Richard and I have been members of First on Fifth, we have felt a significant connection to this church: the vision, the excellent leadership and of course the many welcoming members of the congregation. And First Baptist is our neighborhood church; we live just a stone's throw from the back door of the church.

The vision statement- "We are a community in the heart of the city called by Jesus to practice bold love of God and neighbor and boundless compassion for all people"-connects and resonates with me. I think my past experiences will help inform and guide our steps forward to address our mission priorities to mitigate poverty and cultivate the well-being of children.

Winston-Salem is my community and my home. I grew up here, attending Ardmore Elementary, Dalton Junior High School and RJ Reynolds High School. My husband Richard teases that I have lived within a ten-mile radius for most of my life.

I started my professional career late in life because my time was devoted to the care of my children. Definitely my role, or I should say job, as a parent of nine prepared me for what would become my profession for the last twenty-five years.

I have just recently retired my position as executive director of Imprints Cares, a non-profit whose vision is to unlock the full potential of children and their families for success in school and in life. Because of my work with Imprints Cares, I have an understanding of the issues and complexities facing children and families living in poverty. And because my retirement is recent, I still have connections and relationships with many non-profits serving this vulnerable population.

In addition to my work in parenting education, I also served on the staff of Wake Forest Baptist Church in the role of Children's Ministry Coordinator for ten years. I helped to build the children's program as well as lead in worship.

I was struck this past Sunday by the high-profile visibility of the church in our downtown area: The glorious architecture adorned with the large and colorful banners, the brimming pots of flowers and the beautiful floral cross. This stunning presence coupled with the church's strategic location uniquely positions us for service to the community.

These next few weeks, I plan to have many conversations with you. I want to understand more fully the history of outreach to our community and the hopes you have for the future, so that our work will be built on solid ground. Please reach out to me as well.

