

**What was one of the most important parts of seminary to you?**

Being a pastor-intern for almost two and a half years at a vital and healthy Presbyterian church. The church had about 250 members and a total of about 500 women, men and children. My responsibilities included preaching, and preparing and leading worship; helping reimagine, preparing lesson plans for and facilitating a multi-generational Adult Sunday School class and small group; pastoral care; participating in Session meetings; serving on the steering Sub-Team of the Future Planning Team (including construction project planning); assisting the Habitat for Humanity effort and increasing its visibility in the congregation; Men's Breakfast; helping restructure the Youth Ministry Program; helping the healing to start on a festering wound from before I arrived; aiding the Interim Process, as the congregation moved from the retirement of their pastor of sixteen years into the present and future, including strategic planning and implementation; and acting as the *de facto* solo pastor for one month between the departure of the installed pastor and the arrival of the interim. The real-world experience of my internships have been invaluable to me. Perhaps the church's Internship Committee's Final Evaluation of my tenure there says it best: Anthony was thrown a lot of curve balls ....all of which he handled well. He dealt with unique circumstances like the retirement of a pastor, the building of an addition, and even sour attitudes surrounding the departure of the previous leader [the Associate Pastor] of the small group he was assigned to lead. He navigated each challenge and turned every trial into a learning opportunity. Anthony has an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and we can think of no better trait in a pastor, who as a spiritual leader is called not only to teach his flock, but also to learn from them.

**What do you for fun?** Hike, bike, exercise, read, travel, and watch movies and sports. I have also coached middle and high school wrestling, both professionally and as a volunteer.

**What are your favorite sports?** Amateur wrestling and football.



## OUR NEW PASTOR

- ANTHONY SAN FILIPPO -

Shawnee Presbyterian Church  
Shawnee on Delaware PA 18356

**Where are you from?** Most recently, Gettysburg and Mercersburg, PA. Before moving to Pennsylvania in 2011 to attend seminary, we lived in Davie County, NC, just west of Winston-Salem. It had a population of about 37,000. Only one high school, though!

**But you don't sound completely Southern.** Nope- I was born and raised in New Jersey until I went off to college in North Carolina. My mom is from North Carolina and my dad was first-generation American. His parents were from Sicily.

**Do you have a family?** Yes. Hope, my wife, and I have been married twenty eight years this July. We have two kids, John and Katie. John, 23, graduated from Wesleyan University in Connecticut last May and is living and working in Denver, CO. Katie, almost 22, was a junior at Guilford College in North Carolina, majoring in English. She is now seeking a college to which to transfer so she can minor in Linguistics. Hope and the kids are some of the finest folks that I know- I'm blessed!

**How did you and Hope meet?** Volunteering as leaders with our church's high school youth group. I initiated a Habitat for Humanity building trip for the youth group and Hope and I got to be best friends on it. (I love telling folks who are going on their first Habitat trip that story and watching their eyes as they think, "Could that happen to me?").

**Does Hope have a career?** She teaches school. Hope has taught from students from kindergarten to community college, and has won several awards for her teaching. Her specialties are ESL (English as a Second Language) and Spanish. Most recently, Hope taught Spanish and coordinated international exchanges at Mercersburg Academy an independent boarding school in Mercersburg, PA. We lived in a dormitory with sixty boys and three other faculty families.

**Have you -always believed in God?** Yep! And I have been "churched" since I was a child. I went even when my parents didn't go. I've been blessed by the church families to which I've belonged. Blessed by people like a Sunday School teacher, Mr. Johnson, and my own high school youth group leaders, Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock. They've had life-long impact on me. They showed me what it means to be in community with the faithful, helped me experience the love and security and joy that comes with a group of folks, who are exploring and living as best we can our Christian faith, together.

**Why are you Presbyterian?** I was actually raised Episcopal and Lutheran. Then, I attended Presbyterian colleges and fell in love with Presbyterian worship. Over the past forty years since then, I have come to value deeply our theology and form of church government, too. Hard not to value a denomination where our Living, Loving, Triune God is sovereign, the members govern and pastors are servant-teachers, not rulers.

**What did you do before you started the journey to pastoring?** General contracting and real estate development and investment. Way back, also farmland preservation and environmental education and policy work. Basically, my professional life has centered around trying to answer the call, commands and examples of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to live in love and harmony with one another and Creation.

**How did you decide to be a pastor?** I didn't really "decide," even though faith and church have been vital to me since I was a little boy; I was called. Because of my NHL, in the fall of 2009 we were visiting Pennsylvania boarding schools for John, took the wrong road, and drove by Gettysburg Seminary. That's when God planted the seed, "Think about going to seminary." The field was already plowed, for I was overflowing with the tremendous grace and love we had received from folks while fighting cancer. So not a choice really in the end- God wouldn't leave me alone. I got tired of saying "No" and felt God's peace when I finally submitted and said "Yes" in June, 2011. I started in the fall. That wrong road turned out to be the right road!