

POSITION DESCRIPTION

MOUNTAIN RETREAT ASSOCIATION

d/b/a

MONTREAT CONFERENCE CENTER

PRESIDENT

The Montreat Conference Center, as a mission center of the Presbyterian Church (USA), seeks to glorify God by serving the whole Church of Jesus Christ by calling all God's people to a place set apart, for spiritual commitment and renewal, to grow in discipleship, to build relationships, and to prepare one another for Christ's ministry in the world.

History

The Mountain Retreat Association ("MRA"), also known as Montreat, is located in the mountains of Western North Carolina near Asheville. Montreat traces its roots to the late 1890s when a group of Presbyterian clergy and lay leaders purchased land there with a vision of creating a mountain retreat (hence the name, Montreat) dedicated to physical and spiritual renewal. MRA held its first "Christian Assembly" in July, 1897, attracting nearly 400 participants who were housed mostly in tents. The first Montreat Hotel was completed in 1901.

In 1905, The Presbyterian Church (US) purchased Montreat and the first Presbyterian Conference was held in Montreat later that year. The next two decades saw the founding of the school which later became Montreat College, a four-year accredited institution of higher education (the "College") and the construction of many of the facilities that comprise the core facilities of Montreat including the Assembly Inn, which replaced the Montreat Hotel.

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of transition for Montreat, and included the incorporation of the Town of Montreat (the "Town"), and the separation of MRA and the College, resulting in the current governance structure as three separate organizations. Other notable moments in Montreat's historical development include: becoming a national conference center of the Presbyterian Church (USA) when the northern and southern churches reunited; establishment of a conservation easement for the 2,500-acre Montreat Wilderness to permanently protect the mountain cove property from excessive development; and successful completion of a \$20 million endowment campaign in 2007.

For over 100 years, Montreat has been "a place set apart" for spiritual rest, renewal, and recreation and it is one of three national conference centers of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Today, it is situated on 4,000 acres, 2,500 of which are in the conservation easement, and has a year-round staff of 55. The operating budget is approximately \$6 million, annual gifts average about \$800,000, and endowment assets are approximately \$12 million (with an additional \$9 million in pledges and estate gifts not yet collected).

Programs

Montreat's primary ministry is the Montreat Conference Center, which serves more than 35,000 guests on an annual basis while providing a varied selection of programs including:

- More than 35 national conferences for youths and adults mostly in the summer months, and weekend conferences and retreats throughout the year, with programming primarily developed by staff, in collaboration with numerous volunteers;
- Summer worship featuring some of the nation's most respected preachers and regional musicians in historic Anderson Auditorium;
- Retreats and meetings of churches and other groups primarily on spring and fall weekends;
- Clubs, the summer day camp and childcare program at the conference center, which provides quality care for children ages six months through five years and a camp experience for children from kindergarten through high school;
- Recreational programs and opportunities including tennis, volleyball, softball, the Robert Lake Park playground for children, fishing, indoor basketball and volleyball, miles of hiking and walking trails, and during the summer months the barn and Friday Night Barn Dances, an outdoor Olympic-sized pool, canoes and paddle boats on Lake Susan, and a variety of arts and crafts programs at the Currie Craft Center and Sally Jones Pottery; and
- Other programs designed to involve conference center friends and supporters while encouraging the participation of churches and individuals nationwide.

Of note, over 1,500 churches send groups to Montreat every year for conferences and retreats. Montreat's Church Relations program keeps constituent churches and presbyteries in conversation with the conference center, allowing Montreat to better serve their needs. In an effort to make the conferences and programs at Montreat available to all who desire them, Montreat Conference Center also offers a number of scholarships. Montreat is also available as an Elder Hostel and as a "hosting facility" for conferences, church groups, not-for-profits, and businesses, providing an opportunity for those groups to utilize Montreat's facilities while obtaining a measure of privacy and freedom from distractions.

Critical to the success of the Montreat programs are a number of hospitality elements. Lodging for Montreat's guests includes the historic Assembly Inn, as well as ten other smaller inns and lodges, all of which provide space for up to 465 guests. In addition, there is a family campground with 29 sites. Dining service is provided at Assembly Inn, which has the capacity to serve approximately 300 buffet-style meals per seating. Retail operations include a general store and a combination bookstore and gift shop with annual revenue of about \$750,000, as well as a leased operation, Ten Thousand Villages, which specializes in fair-trade merchandise. For large conferences, Montreat has approximately a dozen meeting facilities, including the historic Anderson Auditorium.

The Position of President

The current President of Montreat recently retired. Consequently, the Board of Directors of MRA must recruit a new President to oversee and manage the operations of Montreat and to lead the organization forward.

While reporting to the Board of Directors and its Chairman, the President of Montreat is responsible for managing all aspects of Montreat's operations including the conference center, programs, facilities, staff, volunteers, and the relationships with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Town, the College, Montreat's various constituencies and other western North Carolina communities. The new President will operate under policies established by the Board of Directors and will manage the organization through direct reporting relationships with department heads in charge of Finance, Hospitality, Program Development and Marketing, Development, and the Center for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. The President will also work closely with the standing committees of the Board (Audit, Board Life, Finance, and Strategic Planning), as well as support groups such as the Development Foundation, the President's Council, the Endowment Investment Committee, the Wilderness Committee, and the Memorial Garden Committee.

The President will live on the property and will host numerous receptions and other events, and must be visible and available during major programs and events. In addition, the President has overall responsibility for all conferences and programs to ensure that they are offered in accordance with the Montreat mission statement, appropriately varied, and fairly represent the diversity of the church in content and attendance.

The President must seek to ensure that Montreat programs achieve appropriate balance between content and popularity, sponsor programs that are relevant to current issues and network to attract renowned theologians, writers, and speakers who are enthusiastic about and well grounded in their chosen areas. Finally, the President must ensure that programs managed by others, where Montreat is the host venue, meet the high standards of Montreat.

The President must establish high standards and ensure that Montreat provides high quality services and facilities for conferences, programs, recreation and worship, various Presbyterian churches and other Presbyterian groups, other non-profit groups, and business groups. To do so, the President must oversee effective planning and execution of systems and procedures enabling staff and volunteers to provide a high quality experience for guests.

The President must also develop a system of diverse programs and experiences to enable Montreat to reach a broad segment of society within the boundary of the Montreat mission statement with attention to increasing racial and ethnic diversity. Central to all that, the President must maintain the spirit of Montreat as a holy, welcoming, and reconciling place, while ensuring that Montreat's leaders, board, staff, and volunteers are committed to Montreat's role in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Importantly, the President must continually focus on preserving the beauty and the historical character of the physical plant.

In addition, the President must manage Montreat's financial affairs with integrity and in a fiscally prudent manner, with transparency in reporting to Montreat's stakeholders. More specifically, the President must oversee preparation of an annual, achievable budget that maintains a competitive and affordable pricing structure for all offerings while ensuring all budget objectives are met including the building of appropriate revenues.

The President must be actively involved in developing funding for the purpose of maintaining facilities, keeping attendance costs reasonable, and providing scholarship support. In so doing, the President, in collaboration with the Board of Directors, is expected to articulate a vision for Montreat and marshal the resources to achieve that vision. Specifically, this includes developing, planning, and executing the annual fund raising campaign as well as other imaginative fund raising campaigns for capital improvements and other special purposes. The new President is expected to focus on enlarging the base of donor support and insuring that policies, investment programs, and oversight personnel are in place to appropriately invest and protect both operating and long-term funds.

A very important function that only a president can effectively fill is that of developing and maintaining good relationships with major neighbors and stakeholders. In Montreat's case, these persons and entities obviously include major individual donors and also many Presbyterian churches that support Montreat both with monetary contributions and by their involvement in conferences and retreats. Equally important is good relations and interaction with Montreat's neighbors, which include the Town, the College and the Cottagers (families with summer or permanent homes at Montreat). From a church perspective, the President must be an important contact for Montreat Presbyterian Church, the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) nationally.

Other responsibilities will include: leading ongoing long-range, strategic planning; planning and executing a marketing strategy designed to market offerings to appropriate audiences and groups so as to achieve maximum attendance, including but not limited to direct marketing, speaking engagements, and advertising; expanding the network of Montreat participants and volunteers to work on behalf of the Montreat mission, encouraging and motivating others to share the Montreat experience; and continuing to grow, in quality and content, Montreat's year-round programs.

The Board believes that Montreat has a very capable and motivated senior leadership team, as well as a solid staff supporting Montreat's missions. To lead that staff effectively, the President must provide motivational servant leadership while ensuring fairness and caring consideration for all. The new President must continue recruiting and maintaining a carefully selected, diverse and honored staff that shares in the vision of Montreat. Moreover, the President must maintain a competitive pay and benefits package for all employees while promoting hospitality as a form of ministry.

Characteristics and Personal Traits

The successful candidate must have strong executive management skills, excellent verbal, presentation, writing and interpersonal skills. A Bachelor's degree is required. In addition, the successful candidate must have senior management experience with profit and loss responsibility. Working knowledge of non-profit financial management, budgeting and fund raising would be desirable. Also, prior experience with governance and management of organizations, human resources management, church leadership, and interaction with Board of Directors leadership would be particularly appropriate.

The individual must be a committed Presbyterian with a deep love for the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the desire to serve Christ and all of God's people. Additionally, the individual must have a strong and engaging intellect that enables him/her to think globally, ecumenically, theologically, and broadly about the potential to serve Christ and the Presbyterian Church.

Personally, the new President must be a responsible, self-motivated, well-organized professional with a significant degree of personal initiative while committed to personal and professional growth. The individual also must be analytical, values-driven, and of the highest integrity. While flexible, open-minded, and naturally inquisitive, the successful candidate must also be intelligent, mature, poised, and self-confident. In addition, the individual will have a strong record of developing and maintaining effective working relationships based on mutual trust and respect with Board members, management, program staff, and other external constituencies. Central to all that, the successful candidate must be an effective, innovative, approachable, high-energy leader who will positively influence the present and future direction of Montreat while translating vision into the reality that Montreat can provide for God's people.

In summary, Montreat is looking for a highly regarded Presbyterian who has an excellent professional and personal reputation, exceptional integrity, and strong spiritual values. Ideally, the individual will have strong communication, management, and leadership skills capable of galvanizing Board, staff, and community support for Montreat's programs and mission. As such, the new President will be a critical contributor to the success of Montreat as it enters the next phase of its development.

Wherever in this document, "man," "men" or their related pronouns may appear, either as words or as parts of words (other than with obvious reference to named male individuals), they have been used for literary purposes and are meant in their generic sense (i.e., to include all humankind - both female and male genders).