

The Pastor Nominating Committee presents

Rev. Melissa Schaser



As our next Lead Pastor



HOPE CHURCH

A Little More About Pastor Melissa

Personal Background

- Married to Dr. Nicholas Schaser, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Macalester College
- Daughter Lydia - 8 years old
- Daughter Sophia - 5 years old
- Lives in Richfield

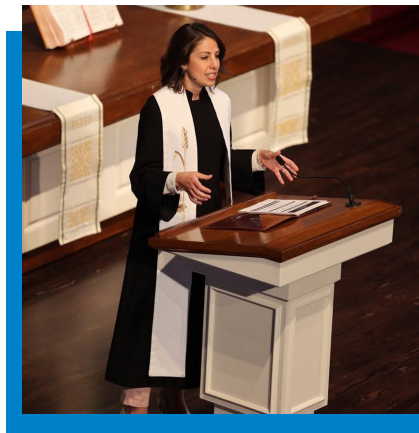


Education

- Fuller Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry in Leading Adaptive Change (Anticipated May 2027)
- Ordination, ECO: Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (October 2018)
- Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Master of Divinity (May 2014)
- Anderson University, Bachelor of Arts in Bible and Religion (May 2011)
- Oxford University, Certificate of Study in Theology (April 2010)

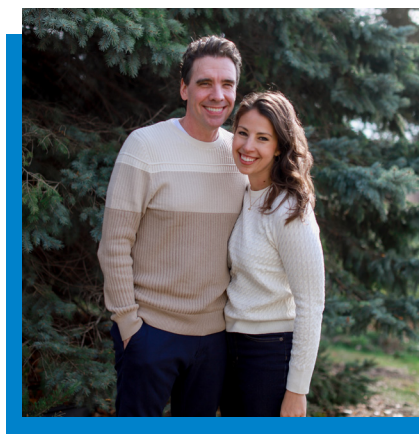
Ministry Experience

- Christ Presbyterian Church (Edina, MN) August 2022–present, Pastor of Groups & Community Life
- Christ Presbyterian Church (Edina, MN) August 2016–June 2022, Pastor of Congregational Care
- Saint Thomas Midtown Hospital August 2014–August 2015, Chaplain Resident
- Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt May 2012–May 2014, Chaplain Intern
- Vice Moderator, Presbytery of the Upper Midwest, January 2026–December 2027
- Ministry Partnership Team Chair, Presbytery of the Upper Midwest, January 2023–December 2025
- Synod Executive Nominating Committee Member, January 2025–December 2031



Interests

- Reading fiction and biographies
- Summertime family trips to Gull Lake
- Enjoying the everyday moments of parenting and family life



From The Pastor Nominating Committee

Dear Covenant Partners and Friends of Hope Church,

On May 22, 2025, the Session tasked the PNC to identify a candidate to serve as Lead Pastor/Head of Staff who embraces the mission, vision, values, and culture of Hope Church, and who possesses the skills and experience to lead us into the next season of ministry.

After a deeply prayerful discernment process, it is with gratitude, humility, and joyful anticipation that we recommend Rev. Melissa Schaser to serve as our next Lead Pastor/Head of Staff.

This sacred journey has invited us to hold our expectations with open hands, giving thanks for God’s faithfulness to Hope and trusting His leading for the future. In that posture, we believe God has led us to Pastor Melissa, and we are excited to continue discerning together what God has ahead for Hope Church.

We encourage you to listen to Melissa’s sermons:



"Fear Not"



"Israel Through the Red Sea"



"Can I Trust the Bible?"

And podcast:



Pastor's Cut

A Letter from Pastor Melissa

To the congregation of Hope Church:

I am deeply honored and grateful for the opportunity to be considered as your next Lead Pastor.

Nick and I, along with our daughters Lydia and Sophia, are excited about the possibility of becoming part of the Hope family. Nick has enjoyed connecting with many of you through the classes he has taught at Hope, and our girls are looking forward to Sunday mornings, being discipled by your caring leaders, and yes—the donuts.

Throughout my conversations with the Pastor Nominating Committee, I have been inspired by your vision to be a Crossover Community: going deeper with Jesus, wider in the kingdom, and closer in community. That vision reflects what I believe the church is called to be—a people formed by Christ, graciously welcoming others and committed to relationships that witness to the Gospel.

As a pastor, my desire is to preach Scripture faithfully, care for people personally, and cultivate a church culture where people encounter the grace of Jesus in tangible ways. I believe the church's strongest witness comes through a community learning to follow Jesus together with honesty, compassion, courage, and hope.

I also recognize that seasons of transition carry excitement and uncertainty. Please know I approach this moment with deep respect for Hope's history, gratitude for those who have faithfully led before, and a sincere desire to listen well and learn from you.

Thank you for the prayerful care you have given to this process. I am praying that God continues to grant wisdom, unity, peace, and joy as you discern the future He has for Hope Church. Nick, Lydia, Sophia, and I are grateful for you already and are excited to see where the Lord leads.

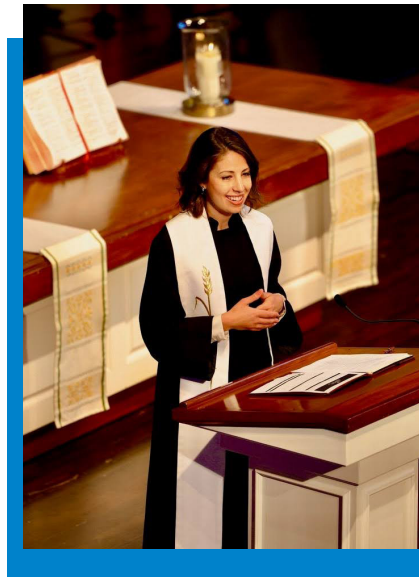
In Christ,

Rev. Melissa Schaser

Why Rev. Melissa Schaser?

1. Keeping Jesus at the Center

Pastor Melissa's leadership begins with Jesus. Her own commitment to going deeper with Jesus shapes the way she lives, leads, and discipled others. She believes discipleship is at the heart of the church's mission — helping people encounter Christ, grow in faith, and follow Him more fully in everyday life. We were especially drawn to her belief that as people are formed more deeply in Christ, God grows His kingdom—both within the church and out into the community.



2. Seeing Where God Is Leading

Pastor Melissa brings a clear and compelling vision for the church, helping congregations move faithfully into the future by equipping leaders, building healthy systems for growth, and strengthening the church's witness in the community. We were drawn to the way she embraces Hope's mission to create a crossover community—moved by Jesus toward one another. We appreciated the ways she described reinforcing that vision through sermon series and on-ramp small group studies that help people live it out together.



3. Equipping and Empowering Others

Pastor Melissa is a collaborative and empowering leader who invests deeply in both staff and laity. Rooted in discipleship, she has a passion for helping people grow spiritually and develop the gifts God has given them for leadership and ministry. We were deeply encouraged by the way she equips and encourages others, building teams where both staff and lay leaders are supported, empowered, and able to flourish in their callings.

She is also a respected and emerging leader within ECO, having served as Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of the Upper Midwest and delivered the keynote sermon at this year's ECO's National Gathering. Afterward, several Hope members urged us to consider her—not knowing that she was already one of the very few finalists for the position! Her experience working with pastors, elders, and church leaders across ECO gives her a strong understanding of collaborative church leadership and governance.

4. Preaching that Connects Life and Faith

Pastor Melissa's preaching is deeply rooted in Scripture, centered on Jesus, and connected to everyday life. As an expository preacher, she communicates God's Word with clarity, purpose, and grace — every word counts. She has a unique ability to speak to everybody in the room, helping both new and mature believers encounter the Gospel in ways that are accessible, meaningful, and transformative.



5. Shepherding with Grace

Alongside her leadership gifts, Pastor Melissa has the heart of a shepherd. She listens well, leads with humility and grace, and genuinely cares for people. We were drawn to the way she can lead with confidence while also remaining compassionate and relational. Melissa has the ability to walk with people through both joys and challenges, helping others feel seen, valued, and cared for as they grow in faith together.

