

A Proclamation of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

WHEREAS, the Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston is celebrating 15 years of faithful service as Senior Pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Black Johnston has blessed us with world-class preaching that feeds the soul while stimulating the mind and touching the heart; and

WHEREAS, he guided the congregation through the COVID-19 pandemic with beautifully produced livestream worship services that continue to attract hundreds of viewers every week and a growing virtual congregation of actively engaged worshipers; and

WHEREAS, he has expanded the church's reputation for excellence in the arts, including launching the prestigious Gotto Lecture Series, supporting our superlative music ministry, establishing the Arts & Our Faith Committee, and initiating plans for a museum-quality historical exhibit; and

WHEREAS, he has embraced Fifth Avenue's commitment to serve New Yorkers in need, instituting the Ecumenical Outreach Partnership for the homeless with St. Patrick's Cathedral and Saint Thomas Church, as well as the pandemic-inspired meal ministry A Place at the Table; and

WHEREAS, he has encouraged Fifth Avenue members to study and address social issues such as immigration, refugees, and racism, culminating in the dedication of the Betsey Jackson Board Room, honoring an enslaved charter member of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, he has been an outstanding steward of our historic building, overseeing a capital campaign to restore the brownstone, update the choir loft, and renovate the church house; establishing the Columbarium; shepherding a major kitchen renovation; and spearheading a forthcoming renovation of Kirkland Chapel; and

WHEREAS, he has kept the church on a sound financial footing, overseeing 15 years of balanced budgets and preserving the value of our endowment for the benefit of future generations; and

WHEREAS, he has embodied our congregation's "All Are Welcome" watchword with a commitment to families, couples, young adults, LGBTQ members, and community groups that bring members together for study and fellowship; and

WHEREAS, he has renewed Fifth Avenue's reputation as "the Cathedral of Presbyterianism," creating meaningful relationships with our Catholic, Episcopal, Jewish, and Islamic neighbors, as well as First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens, and other sister congregations; and

WHEREAS, he has articulated a bold and timely vision for how Christians can move beyond political and social divisions in his acclaimed book *Elusive Grace*; and

WHEREAS, he has served as an inspiring head of staff, mentoring associate pastors, seminarians, and church employees, as well as servant leaders on the Session and boards of Trustees and Deacons; and

WHEREAS, he and his wife, Amy, chose to set down roots in Manhattan and raise their children, Isabella and Oliver, as beloved members of our church family;



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, on this 18th day of June, 2023, hereby express our sincere appreciation and affection to the Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston for his many contributions during 15 years of ministry on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 55th Street.