**The Rev. Dr. A. Vanessa Hawkins**

Rev. Dr. A. Vanessa Hawkins is a spiritual companion, scholar, and retired Teaching Elder member of New Hope Presbytery. As she recently transitioned into retirement, she spent time discerning with the Spirit how to continue to serve God and others. The answer was to serve others as a spiritual director and companion. In response, she created the Hush Harbor Center for Soul Care. As a spiritual director, she endeavors to walk alongside others—to listen deeply, to hold sacred space for faith exploration, and to guide others as they seek to uncover their truth and true selves as they experience the healing presence of the Spirit. In 2014, she received her Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction from San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, CA.

Vanessa has served the PCUSA as a Presbyterian campus minister, mission partner in South Africa, pastor, denominational staff in Louisville, KY, mid-council leader in New Hope Presbytery and in the Presbytery of Giddings-LoveJoy in St. Louis, MO, and as interim minister in various New Hope churches. She is originally from Henderson, North Carolina. She earned her BA degree (English/Media Journalism) from North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC; a Master in Christian Education from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA; a Master of Divinity degree from Johnson C. Smith Seminary, a constituent school at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, GA; and a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies in spirituality and practical theology researching the impact of race on pedagogies utilized in theological settings.