

Dear Church Family,

We are so glad to hear from you all, to get your feedback, to hear your thoughts and questions. As a reminder, we are now hosting 'office hours' each month, and for February we've scheduled next Sunday, February 26, during the Sunday school hour. A couple of us will be in the office building to chat with you. You can sign up at the door for a 15-minute segment; feel free to stop by!

Our co-chair Cindy Fitzgerald presented a summary report at the annual congregational meeting, and this update will give some recap of that report.

We got a chance to introduce you to our consultant, Josh Eby, through a short video he sent us to greet the congregation. We have been using him for a few months now. Usually he takes a church from start to finish in their search but he was gracious enough to jump into the middle of our search and share with us his wisdom and experience from helping many churches find a new pastor. We wanted you to meet Josh, even if only through a video, because he has been an encouragement to us and has ministered to us every time we've met with him. We are very grateful for him. Recently he began recruiting for us and making the first contact with pastors we would like to speak with to see if they are interested in our Lead Pastor position.

We are sad to report that Tim Moniz has resigned from the committee for personal reasons. Tim says his decision came after prayerful consideration and much counsel and he notes, "I want to thank the church for the long-standing support and prayers throughout this process. They have been greatly appreciated. I look forward to hearing who the Lord is calling to be the next Lead Pastor here at First Pres." We have appreciated his contributions to our committee's work and his perspective, and we're going to take his good thoughts and ideas with us as we continue on in our work to find a new Lead Pastor for our congregation.

Since April and as of this week, we have considered 22 candidates who have submitted resumes and candidate packets to us, and for many of these we've also listened to at least one or two sermons. We had conducted interviews with several and we were starting to feel like God could be leading a couple of them to be our next pastor. However, in both of those cases, they let us know they didn't think we would be a good fit, in particular that some of their views were a little more conservative than ours. We were disappointed, of course, but we were encouraged that the process is working: that we are representing our church's distinctions clearly so that we find a pastor uniquely fitted to FPC. With Josh's leading, we continually use these things to ask ourselves, "What is God doing?" and "What does health look like?"

We've looked into many pastors who have been recommended to us or who we've found by researching PCA church websites. One of the first things we do is listen to an online sermon or two and then try to learn more about them to decide if we want to contact them to consider our church for their next pastoral role. In most cases, our consultant Josh is making the initial contact now. Many of these pastors are not interested in considering a change, but not all.

We recently updated our church profile and last week we reposted it on the PCA Pastoral Search website which put us back at the top of the list of openings in the PCA. That has led to more candidates submitting resumes and sermons, which we are reviewing and deciding whether to invite them to an interview. We recently begun interviews again. And leads and suggestions are still coming in.

Please feel free to contact any of us about any questions you may have about the search process, any referrals you may have of potential candidates, or with words of encouragement. We appreciate hearing that you are praying for us. We are praying for the man who will become our next pastor and for you as well.

In Christ,

The Pastoral Search Committee (Dave Burbridge, Cindy Fitzgerald, Sarah Jones, Rob Joss, Russ Queen, Nina Walters, and Becki Whetsel)

firstpresmasearch@gmail.com