

Lead Pastor Discernment Guide

September 21 – October 5, 2025

Pastor Kevin announced retirement on Sunday, Sept 14th. He will complete his tenure with East Side in summer of 2026. The Governance Board is recommending Pastor Drew as the next Lead Pastor. The congregation has the opportunity to affirm that recommendation on Oct 5 at a Special Congregational Meeting. (RSVP to lunch). We want to be a Spirit-led Church, thus, we ask the congregation to prayerfully go through a discernment process similar to what the Governance Board used last November to arrive at their recommendation.

Key Discernment Question

Church: Is Pastor Drew the person God is calling to succeed Pastor Kevin as Lead Pastor?

Personal: What do you need God's guidance for in this season?

What is Discernment?

"Discernment is a process of prayerful reflection which leads a person or community to understanding God's call at a given time or in particular circumstances. It involves listening to God in all the ways He communicates: in prayer, in Scripture, through the church and the world, in personal experience, and through other people." — Tim Challies, *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment*

Discernment Process

1. Fasting & Prayer

Set aside intentional time to seek God's will. Consider fasting for one meal or one day each week as you pray for clarity and guidance.

2. Starting with Open Hands & a Seeking Heart

Personal Examination Test: Reflect on your own expectations:

- Am I expecting a younger version of the current pastor?
- Which values must remain constant, and where might change be healthy?
- Are my concerns about style or substance?

Prayer of Relinquishment: "Lord, I come with preconceived ideas and personal agendas. I release them to You. May my prayer be truly, 'Not my will, but Yours be done.'"

Prayer for Wisdom (James 1:5): "Lord, the choice of a new Lead Pastor is one of the most important decisions for our church. We lack knowledge of the future and cannot see hearts as You do. Your Word promises that if we lack wisdom, we can ask and You will give it generously. Grant us wisdom, Lord—guide our minds, hearts, and steps."

Prayer for Discernment (Psalm 119:125): "My Lord God, I do not know the road ahead, but I trust that my desire to please You does, in fact, please You. Lead me in the way I should go. May my desire to follow You guide my steps."

3. Listening for God's Voice in Scripture

Meditate on Scripture: Reflect on these passages and record any insights or guidance you sense:

- Luke 6:12–16 – Jesus choosing disciples
- Acts 1:14–26 – Choosing Matthias
- Acts 13:1–3 – Affirming Paul & Barnabas
- Numbers 27:15–23 – Moses commissioning Joshua
- 1 Kings 19:15–21 – Elijah calling Elisha
- Joshua 1:1–3 – God commissioning Joshua

5. Listening for the Holy Spirit's Whisper

1 Kings 19:12 – After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. What is the Spirit whispering to you about this decision? What is being put on your heart?

6. Listening for Other Ways God Speaks

Pay attention for any of the following: God given dreams or visions, audible voice, other people, unusual linkage of events, unusual phenomena

7. Seeking Confirmation

Peace Test (James 3:17): As clarity comes, act as though the decision is made. Do you sense a deep peace? Does it endure over time?

Group Test (Amos 3:3; Acts 15:28): We believe God's will is best confirmed through the unity of His people. Pray for consensus and clarity as a congregation.

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