

Dear Members and Friends of Myers Park Baptist Church,

As your Transition Team, we are writing to share with you the reflections and insights gathered during Phase I of our transition process—a **study of the Heritage of Myers Park Baptist Church**. This phase has centered on remembering who we have been as a church, where we came from, how we arrived at this moment, and what unresolved issues or concerns remain part of our journey.

Over the past weeks, we have listened to many voices through congregational discussions and other sources of feedback. From these conversations, several recurring themes have emerged. We have compiled and organized those themes into a summary we are now sharing with you, as they represent key aspects of our collective identity.

Understanding our past is vital as we move forward. We believe we cannot—and should not—move ahead with intentions of ignoring or erasing where we’ve come from. Instead, our history must inform our future. The insights we’ve gained during this phase will help us engage in meaningful conversations about what lies ahead. They will serve as building blocks as we shape a future that honors the rich legacy of Myers Park Baptist Church and the values we hold dear.

Thank you for your honest reflections, your commitment, and your continued faith in this process.

In partnership and hope,
The Myers Park Baptist Church Transition Team

August 2025

Reimagining Our Future: Insights from the MPBC Community

Listening to the past. Confronting the present. Envisioning the future.

The Spirit That Attracts and Inspires

- Progressive theology: open pulpit, deep questions welcomed, LGBTQ+ affirming
- Music & worship that stirs the soul: choir, symbolism, strong liturgy
- Justice-driven faith: inclusion, racial equity, environmental advocacy
- Warmth of community: small groups, shared purpose, authentic belonging
- Education as transformation: J21 speakers, classes, book studies

Our Legacy, Leadership & Longstanding Values

- MPBC as a beacon of justice—through eras of change
 - Courage to challenge norms: SBC break, LGBTQ+ inclusion, refugee support
 - Strong lay and clergy leadership: building community and spiritual courage
 - Programs that shaped us: Through-the-Week School, retreats, mission work
 - The power of story: from paper angels in Advent to shared meals and milestones
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Naming Barriers & Honoring Honest Reflections

- Declining youth and family engagement: missing children, no Sunday School
 - Feeling disconnected: loss of small groups, post-pandemic drift, introversion
 - Leadership transitions: trust, transparency, search for vision
 - Facilities & financial burden: aging infrastructure, sustainability questions
 - Identity crisis: Baptist name, fear of regression, unclear messaging
 - Diversity & representation: slow to reflect community in race, age, thought
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Themes Emerging from Shared Longing

- Reclaiming children's education and youth programs with new vitality
 - Becoming again a spiritual home for seekers, skeptics, and "refugees" from dogmatism
 - Bridging SouthMinster and MPBC: more integration, dialogue, presence
 - Finding a senior minister with humility, humor, and prophetic heart
 - Embracing progressiveness while staying deeply rooted in faith and tradition
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From Listening to Leading Forward

- Facilitate listening circles or town halls based on this feedback
 - Develop a multi-year vision anchored in mission, inclusion, and imagination
 - Invest in outreach, youth programs, and spiritual education
 - Revive the fellowship muscle—retreats, festivals, and spontaneous gatherings
 - Reframe MPBC's identity through bold storytelling and renewed covenant language
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Closing Reflection

"It would be a mistake to focus on who we were. Let us have an appropriate vision of who we are now." *What future are we brave enough to imagine—together?*