

Pastoral Search Team Report

April 2017

The Pastoral Search Team began meeting on February 27, 2017. Each member feels honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve the church in this capacity. While some of our work needs to be held in strict confidence (notably, our discussions about potential candidates), we do want to keep you apprised of our progress by providing a monthly update. We have written this first update in the form of Frequently Asked Questions to give you a context for our work and information about what we are doing now.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we doing a pastor search now?

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the denomination of which we are a part) has a required retirement age of 70 for pastors. John Wood will reach this milestone next April. In anticipation of this, a Transition Team was formed in 2016 to identify and address the factors unique to Cedar Springs in preparation for a Pastoral Search Team. The congregation voted for the members of the Pastoral Search Team on January 22, 2017.

Who is on the Pastoral Search Team?

The team is made up of seven men and seven women. Short biographies of the members were sent to the congregation before they voted on the members. They may be found [here](#).

How were the members of the Pastoral Search Team chosen?

Like many things in the Presbyterian form of government, it was done with a combination of input from the congregation and the session of CSPC. The congregation nominated 298 people as candidates to serve on the team. The session decided that the team would be seven men and seven women, and that they should represent the diversity of our congregation including: different age groups (people from each decade, from 20s to 70s), different ministry groups (global missions, home missions, worship, children's ministry, student ministries, women's ministry, and sport ministry), at least one representative from each of the church offices (elder and deacon) and one representative of the church staff. A Pastoral Search Team Commission of the session brought 14 names to the session for approval, and then these names were brought to the congregation for approval.

What is the Pastoral Search Team doing now?

We started meeting on February 27, and plan to meet weekly. We are praying together, getting to know one another, having discussions with senior people in our denomination, doing some reading, and working on developing the process that we will use.

How long will the process take?

We are not sure. Consensus among the Pastoral Search Team members is that doing it well is more important than doing it quickly. Previous experience at other churches indicates that for a church that has had a senior pastor for as long as CSPC, it is possible that it could take up to two years and possibly more.

What if we don't have a new pastor chosen by the time that John Wood retires?

An interim pastor could be chosen. Our denomination does make allowances for the senior pastor to continue on a year-by-year basis in some cases. This decision will be made as a recommendation from the session.

What input will the congregation have in the process?

Before the Pastoral Search Team was formed, the Transition Team sought congregational feedback via surveys and conversations.

Additionally, we have created an email address where you may send candidate suggestions as well as any questions or recommendations. The address is pastoralsearch@cspc.net

What can you do?

Help us honor the confidentiality of the process. Most of what can be communicated, we will work hard to communicate through these letters and other means (perhaps videos) when appropriate. These letters will be the best place for you to get accurate information.

The most important thing you can do: pray! We as a church must be seeking the Lord in prayer, for wisdom, for direction, for wide hearts to love him and one another. Then we need to listen to the Lord in prayer.

Pray for the church, that God would be preparing our hearts for this next step in the life of our congregation.

Pray that the Lord would lead us to the one He has chosen as our next senior pastor.

Pray for the next senior pastor, that God would be preparing him for this next step in his ministry.

Pray for the Pastoral Search Team, that we would be unified, that we would speak in grace and truth, that we would be given wisdom through this process.

We have been praying the following Psalms together daily, and we would be happy if you would join us:

Sunday - Psalm 121 - Our help comes from you, O God

Monday - Psalm 123 - We look to you, O God

Tuesday - Psalm 125 - We trust in you, O God

Wednesday - Psalm 127 - You build this house, O God

Thursday - Psalm 130 - We wait for you, O God

Friday - Psalm 131 - Our hope is in you, O God

Saturday - Psalm 133 - We are one in you, O God