

Tasks in the Transition Period

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I. Introduction

In November 2018, the congregation voted to engage Pastor Michael to guide First Baptist through the transition from Pastor Mark Clinger’s ministry to the future God intends for the church. The Transition Team was formed in April 2019 by Pastor Michael to assist in his work as Transitional Minister.

Pastor Michael has provided the Transition Team with documents, in part from his affiliation with the Interim Ministry Network, that identify a range of tasks for the transition period. The Team has reviewed those tasks to identify the ones the Transition Team and the Transitional Minister will take leadership. In referring to the transition period, we mean the period between Pastor Mark’s announcing his retirement and the time longer-term arrangements for pastoral leadership are in place at First Baptist.

The tasks and leadership assignments in this document are presented to the congregation and church leadership for transparency, comment, and revision or clarification. The Transition Team has synthesized the tasks into three areas: tasks for the Transition Team (Section II), tasks for the Transitional Minister (Section III), and tasks that should be discussed by the congregation and the Church Council (Section IV). Of course, Pastor Michael is not only the Transitional Minister, but he is a member of the Transition Team so he will participate in the leadership of the Transition Team tasks. The tasks listed in Section IV need additional discussion among the congregation and the Church Council. These are tasks from the initial list that Pastor Michael has provided from his sources. A discussion of their applicability to the First Baptist Church’s transition period is needed. For those tasks deemed appropriate to the transition period, discussion is also needed about who would take on leadership to complete.

Section V provides bylaw references relevant to the pastoral search process. For completeness in covering the transition period tasks, we have also included representative tasks of the Pulpit Committee (Section VI) along with a possible timeline for the transition period (Section VII). The Transition Team suggests that the Pulpit Committee be formed as soon as it is practical in the Fall or Winter of 2019.

II. Transition Team Tasks

The Transition Team is committed to giving guidance during the transition period to the Transitional Minister with the following tasks.

1. Assist the congregation to clarify its identity:
 - in understanding and celebrating its past activities, historical identity, and ties with American Baptists
 - in describing its current membership and the community to which it ministers
 - in understanding and expressing its mission/purpose and its ministries, both current and future
 - in explaining and examining how the church is organized to meet its mission/purpose
 - in specifying expectations of pastoral leadership, and the strengths, skills, and qualities needed.
2. Assist the congregation in developing profile information about the congregation, the church, and the community within which it exists. The profile will contribute to the work of the Pulpit Committee in communications with pastoral candidates. Profile information will answer the following questions.
 - Who are we?
 - Who is our neighbor?
 - Who is God calling us to be?
3. Communicate the work of the Transition Team to the congregation and provide opportunities for the congregation to interact with the Transition Team to enable the Team to complete its tasks.
4. Help the congregation and its leadership determine when they have reached a stage of readiness to commit themselves to begin actively searching for new pastoral leadership.

Notes:

In terms of communication with the congregation (Task 3), we are referring to communication that informs the congregation of the work that the Transition Team is doing and that informs the Transition Team on the insights of congregation members. We have already received communication from the congregation in the form of materials from the 2018 Discernment Process. We are reviewing those materials and deciding what additional information is needed from the congregation to complete our tasks. In general, the Team is considering several communication approaches: (1) distributing meeting summaries; (2) setting up a conversation table on Sunday mornings for use by a couple of Team members to interact with the congregation; (3) providing an open invitation for congregation members to make statements to

the Team at the beginning of Team meetings; (4) publishing information of interest in the Visitor; (5) distributing supplemental surveys to the one used in the Discernment Process; (6) conducting open discussion sessions at times that seem to work best; (7) convening open working sessions with particular tasks in mind (such as getting feedback on particular questions the Transition Team is considering); and (8) encouraging congregation members to communicate directly with a Team member.

Task 4 above says that the Transition Team will help the congregation and its leadership determine when to move forward with the hiring process. The Team suggests that the Pulpit Committee be formed as soon as practical, even before the Team has completed its work. The Transition Team believes that preparatory work for the Pulpit Committee could begin in parallel with the work of the Transition Team because there are activities that could occur prior to completion of the Team's work. Two examples of those activities are consulting with Marie Onwubuariri, Executive Secretary of ABC of Wisconsin, on the details on how to conduct a search using the American Baptist Personnel System, and developing a compensation and personnel policies package to offer a pastoral candidate based on research on what other American Baptist churches are offering their pastors. Representative tasks of the Pulpit Committee are in Section VI. The specific tasks will be determined by the Pulpit Committee after it is formed.

III. Transitional Minister Tasks

As a member of the Transition Team, Pastor Michael will also share in the leadership of the Transition Team's tasks. That leadership activity is not replicated here. Other tasks for Pastor Michael are:

1. With Pastor Jason, conduct worship during the interim period
2. With Pastor Jason, provide pastoral care during the interim period
3. With Pastor Jason, provide regular administrative oversight (office, committee, etc.) during the interim period
4. Attend each meeting of the Church Council to report on the Transition Team's work, to listen to feedback, and to answer any questions
5. Communicate with the congregation via the Visitor
6. Assist individuals in identifying their grief or other emotions over the departure of Pastor Clinger
7. Assist the congregation in the identification and healthy expression of grief or other emotions related to the departure of Pastor Clinger
8. Assist the congregation's knowledge and ability in appropriate methods of dealing with conflict
9. Work with the Church Council and other appropriate groups and ministries of the congregation to develop appropriate goals and strategies (short and longer term) for the congregation's increased health

10. Identify individuals or groups within the congregation's membership needing additional attention, or carrying a special concern, and the best person or group to help address that need.

Notes:

Pastor Michael plans to play a consultative role to the Pulpit Committee.

Pastor Michael's input on dealing with conflict will be important as the Transition Team works with the congregation to develop a church profile. The Discernment Process has revealed that there are many different views on the direction and activities of the church.

IV. Other Tasks Requiring Discussion

There are some tasks that the Transition Team does not think it or Pastor Michael should include in their task lists. These are tasks that need to be discussed further by the Church Council and the congregation to determine their appropriateness and who will take on the leadership in doing them. The Council and congregation may not want to work on some of these tasks during the transition period. As noted above, these tasks were largely drawn from the Interim Ministry Network materials that Pastor Michael provided so some may not be relevant to the transition period for First Baptist Church. In addition, there may be other unlisted tasks that should be added. Here are the tasks requiring further discussion in our opinion:

1. Assist the congregation in discovering and motivating volunteer leadership needs
2. Assist the congregation in understanding and dealing with power issues that may exist with the congregation and its leadership
3. Facilitate healthy processes by which congregational members can deal with conflicts with other members
4. Assist the congregation to develop longer range (3-5) year goals
5. Make recommendation to the congregation on future pastoral staffing and plan the transition to the new staffing configuration
6. Develop plans for the formation and work of the Pulpit Committee
7. Elect the Pulpit Committee
8. Install the pastor.

Notes:

The Transition Team is willing to facilitate discussions with the congregation on future pastoral staff arrangements as part of our assignment to help the congregation clarify its identity. It is not the intent of the Transition Team to make a recommendation on staffing in general, and on whether there will be an associate pastor in particular. This decision will be driven mainly by budget constraints that we believe are beyond the scope of our work responsibilities to assess.

V. Relevant Bylaws

The First Baptist Church bylaws pertaining to a change in pastoral staff are given below.

From Article V. Membership, Section 5. Powers reserved for the membership: *The following powers are reserved for the membership at its business meetings and may not be delegated: ...4. Call or dismiss a pastor.*

From Article VII. The Church Council, Section 1. Duties: *Subject to actions taken by the membership, and except as otherwise restricted in these bylaws, the Church Council has the responsibility to: 1. Engage in long-term planning consistent with its understanding of Christ's purposes, and recommend policies and direction to the membership...*

From Article IX. Freestanding and Self-formed Groups, Section 2. Duties of freestanding elected committees ...Paragraph 3: *The [Pulpit] Committee exists only when there is a vacancy in the pastoral staff. It finds and presents to the membership a candidate for the position.*

From Article IX. Freestanding and Self-formed Groups, Section 3. Election of freestanding elected committees: ... Paragraph 3: *The Pulpit Committee shall consist of seven members. Each of the boards of Deacons, Christian Education, Christian Outreach, and Trustees shall designate a representative to the committee. The remaining three members shall be elected at a business meeting of the membership.*

VI. Representative Pulpit Committee Tasks

The tasks listed in this section are adapted in part from *Calling an American Baptist Minister*, National Ministries, ABC USA, January 2005. These tasks are merely representative of the kinds of tasks that are needed to call a pastor. Presumably the Pulpit Committee, in coordination with Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri, Regional Executive Minister, ABC of Wisconsin, will plan and implement the actual search process, and identify the appropriate tasks for successful completion of the process.

1. Conduct advance planning of Pulpit Committee activities, including deciding how to encourage participation on the Pulpit Committee, how to identify Pulpit Committee leadership, and any other planning to expedite completion of tasks below.
2. Elect/appoint Pulpit Committee members in accordance with the bylaws.
3. Conduct training on how to call a pastor. Coordinate with Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri.
4. Decide how to advertise if outside advertising is used. Determine cost of the advertising.
5. Decide on a budget for the Pulpit Committee. Include in 2020 budget or provide the financial resources in some other way.
6. Decide on the compensation package and associated personnel agreement (e.g., vacations).
7. Prepare the advertising materials.
8. Prepare the search request for American Baptist Personnel Services (ABPS).
9. Disseminate the materials.

10. List First Baptist with the ABPS Ministry Opportunities Listing.
11. Decide how to receive and evaluate applications.
12. Receive the applications
13. Distribute church profile and any supplemental information to candidates. Request letters of interest.
14. Evaluate the applications of interested candidates using the ABPS profiles. Select top candidates.
15. Conduct initial interviews. Evaluate the interviews. Narrow the candidate list.
16. Conduct in-person interviews. Evaluate the interviews.
17. Visit a neutral pulpit to hear a sermon preached by the top candidate(s).
18. Gather and check references. Select the top candidate.
19. Have a weekend introductory visit by the top candidate (could include family members). Hold events to introduce the candidate (and family) to the congregation. Ask the candidate to preach.
20. Convene congregational meeting. Present the candidate. Conduct congregational vote to make a call.
21. Contact the candidate with the congregation's decision. Await a decision after any negotiations over the offer.
22. If the offer is accepted, allow time for the called individual to transition away from a current pastorate.
23. Install new pastor.

VII. Possible Transition Period Timeline

Knowing that the transition will unfold according to God's schedule, not ours, the Transition Team offers the following historical timeline and illustrative future timeline for the transition period.

May 2018:	Pastor Mark announces retirement & the Discernment Team forms
June to November 2018:	Discernment Team begins their work by facilitating congregational discussions and conducting a congregational survey
November 2018:	Pastor Mark retires & Congregation votes to call Rev. Michael Newheart as Transitional Minister
December 2018:	Discernment Team produces written materials regarding the Discernment Process and disbands having completed its work. See http://firstbaptistmadison.org/discernment-materials/ .

- January 2019: Pastor Michael begins work.
- April 2019: Pastor Michael assembles the Transition Team.
- Summer/Fall 2019: Pastor Michael and the Transition Team work on the tasks described in Sections II and III. They use materials from the ABC USA, the Discernment Process, and other sources, and engage the congregation.
- Fall/Winter 2019: Boards and Nominating Committee assemble a slate of candidates for the Pulpit Committee. The Pulpit Committee is elected so it can begin its preliminary work.
- The Transition Team publishes a draft church profile as described in Paragraph II.2. for review.
- The Transition Team facilitates conversations and makes revisions in the draft church profile based on feedback.
- Winter 2019/2020: The church profile is approved by the congregation. The Pulpit Committee begins using the profile to continue its work.
- Winter 2020/
Spring 2021: The Pulpit Committee completes its work. A pastor is called and begins work.