Search Committee Kickoff Meeting – October 5, 2025

Intro:

Good afternoon family. Thank you for joining us today, for your prayers and for your support. We wanted to take this time to provide visibility to the journey that is in front of us. Today, we have a couple of objectives:

- Provide transparency into the pastoral search process.
- Address questions, concerns, and hopes from the congregation.
- Reinforce trust, unity, and prayerful discernment.

- The pastoral search is not just about finding the right leader - it's about all of us discerning God's will together. Our role as a committee is to steward this process faithfully and transparently, and today is a chance for us to share where we are, answer your questions, and hear your voices.
- We want to ensure that we keep all of you informed of what is going on.

Search Committee:

- First, let me introduce the members of our Search Committee... in addition to myself, in alphabetical order.
  - Sis Leslie Hawkes
  - Bro Stuart Herman
  - Sis Lois Jones
  - Sis Tayna Longino
  - Deacon Ed Sharpe
  - Deacon Eric Smith
  - Sis Lavinia Thompson
  - Sis Joan Toller

- The committee is a nice blend of members representing various ministries, skill sets, backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives across the church.
- Some members expressed interest in serving on the committee, and the Deacon Board prayerfully identified potential candidates, and them to serve. And all accepted.
- The committee's role is to lead the search process, identify qualified candidates, and recommend a final candidate to the congregation for approval.
- The role of the congregation is to select the next pastor. Every member has one vote.
- We've had our kick-off meeting and are in the midst of planning the process.

The journey ahead:

- Second, the journey ahead of us can take an average of 12-18 months.
- As we started our research about the process, the biggest revelation for me was the realization that God has already identified our next pastor. It is up to all of us to find that person.
- This is why we need prayer - to order our steps. To provide us with wisdom and discernment. To cover us with a spirit of unity.
- The process has the following high level steps:
  - Foundation setting and preparation - planning by the committee, conducting church surveys, developing the profile of the church.
  - Defining who we are - building the church profile; surveying the congregation on what is important to us. That helps to inform the opportunity.

    - The search - this is officially announcing the vacancy; candidate outreach; receiving and reviewing resumes and applications; vetting candidates
    - Finalist engagement - congregational interaction
    - Vote - congregational vote and transitional planning
    - Installation and new beginning

Communication:

- Third, we are committed to keeping you informed every step of the way.
- We are developing our communication plan, which includes these in-person sessions.
- We will leverage multiple communication channels - email, bulletin board, website, anonymous feedback.
- We want to make sure you are all kept abreast of what is going on.

A couple of other points:

- While Pastor's retirement has been publicly announced, we have not officially posted the opening.

Next steps:

- The SC planning continues - we are in the process of determining the timing of the various steps.
- We will develop a survey for the church to complete. It will help us identify what is important to all of us.
- We have a few resources to share with all of you - we will figure out the best way to share them (email or website)
    - An overview of the process
    - A presentation
    - A podcast