

Discerning the Future of Our Church

Listening for God's Call

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect – Romans 12:2

Who participates?

All members of the congregation willing to let God help them focus their concerns for the future of their church.

How do I become involved?

- A. By receiving this packet of information.
- B. By agreeing to spend at least 15 minutes a day for the next two weeks reading Scripture, praying and reflecting on the future of this church.
- C. Read a brief Scripture lesson (10 days)
 - ...a different Scripture each day
 - ...each Scripture will present a "picture" for the church's life and mission
- D. Pray for openness for God's leading
 - ...such as: "Dear God, open my heart and mind so that I might hear your desires for our congregation."
- E. Spend time prayerfully reflecting upon the Scripture by asking three questions.
 - 1. What does this tell me about God? (2 or 3 descriptive words or phrases)
 - 2. What does this tell me about God's desire for our church? (2 or 3 descriptive words or phrases)
 - 3. What kind of associate pastoral leadership would be appropriate for our church if we were to live into this image of church? (2-3 descriptive words or phrases)
- F. Write down your "Key Ideas" that came during this time of prayer and reflection.
- G. Come to the meeting in two weeks where everyone's Key Ideas will be discussed.

What happens to the "Key Ideas" I have written down?

They will be added to the Key Ideas with the rest of the congregation and will become the basis for the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) that is developed for the Associate Pastor search process.

What happens if I miss a day or two?

Start again tomorrow with the Scripture lesson for the day. This will keep you together with the rest of the congregation.

If you have time, go back and read the missed Scripture(s). Just make sure you have completed the regular work for the day before going back.

What happens if I cannot attend the next meeting when the Key Ideas are gathered and discussed?

Ask another member of the congregation to bring your Summary Sheet to the meeting so your "Key Ideas" can be included.

Daily Scripture Readings

(Monday) 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see,

everything has become new!! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

(Tuesday) Ephesians 4:1-3

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

(Wednesday) Ephesians 4:11-13

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

(Thursday) 1 Thessalonians 5:15-22

See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of the prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

(Friday) Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore, God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father.

(Monday) Hebrews 13:1-3

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.

(Tuesday) Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves in love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Wednesday) Matthew 5:13-16

You are salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

(Thursday) Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, "I am with you always, to the end of age"

(Friday) John 17:25-26

"Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them".

FINAL MEETING

- A. The congregation members will break into small groups, select a spokesperson, and:
1. Share the Key Ideas that were most present during your prayerful reflection.
Note: During the discussion, a COM representative will tally the group responses.
 2. Select the most important Key Ideas for inclusion in the MDP (Ministry Discernment Profile) that your Associate Pastor Nominating Committee will prepare.

3. Begin conversation about potential members of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee.

Note: Per the Commission on Ministry in the Presbytery, one has to attend this Discernment Process to serve on an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee.

B. Continue to pray for your church and the upcoming process ahead.

SUMMARY SHEET

(To be completed prior to the meeting to discern and discuss Key Ideas)

What are the 3-5 Key Ideas about God's desire for our church that I discerned as I prayerfully reflected on the scriptures the past two weeks?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What are 3-5 strongest ideas or impressions which I thought/felt about the kind of associate pastoral leadership our church needs in order to be the kind of church God wants us to be?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

BRING THE SUMMARY SHEET WITH YOU TO THE MEETING