

PNC Update to Session (October 21, 2019)

This is an update on behalf of the Pastor Nominating Committee. The PNC includes Chair Marshall Brown, Wendi Cimino, Ralph Davison, Vice Chair Sheri Evans, Stu Johnston, Will Martin, Rosa McNairy, Anne Shoemaker, Andrew Spainhour, Becky Veraar, and Libby Wakefield.

The PNC was elected by the congregation in March and has met 20 times since the first of April, usually for 2 to 3 hours at a time. We do homework between meetings reviewing Pastor Information Forms (or PIFs – think of them as Presbyterian resumes), vetting recommendations and referrals, researching candidates, listening to (or when we're lucky watching) online sermons, and contacting and speaking with pastors to gauge interests and nurture relationships so that they and we may discern whether God is calling us towards a future together. When we meet, we report back and gain each other's reactions, insights, and sense of next steps. Our work is necessarily confidential, and we go to great lengths to maintain that commitment, which is essential to our candidates. Our meetings are marked by caring and concern for our church, for the hopes our congregation has expressed, and for our individual perspectives as we work to discern where God is leading us together.

We have considered to date a total of nearly 140 women and men, many of whom are passionate, dynamic, even visionary preachers, leaders, and teachers. We are learning that there is a familiar angst in our denomination about our aging memberships, about an overall decline in regular attendance, and the costs of maintaining buildings and grounds. But we are also learning that our denomination has educated and developed pastors who inspire and energize their congregations and who use Scripture to face this week's and this era's challenges. We have hope and excitement about our future, and we want you to know that.

Your question, of course, is about timing. We are told that the average search length is one and a half years from the time the prior Senior Pastor departs ... and that First Pres is not an average church. Honestly, we don't know when our work will be done. God knows. To try to give you more direction, let me remind you of our process, which is determined by the *Book of Order* and by Presbytery, specifically its Committee on Ministry (or COM).

We are now winnowing our candidates and moving towards an initial interview process. When our interview process is complete, we anticipate narrowing our list to a top 2 or 3. At that point, in collaboration with Presbytery, we will bring in these finalists for confidential "Suitability & Fit" interviews. After a period of further discernment, the PNC will extend a call to a candidate who has successfully completed COM's process, including its background checks. At the positive conclusion of Presbytery's confidential processes, the PNC will ask you, the Session, to call a congregational meeting. At this called congregational meeting, the PNC will name its nominee for approval by the congregation. To review these details, please remember that a flow chart is posted on the Transition webpage that you can access by clicking "Transition" in the right corner of fpcgreensboro.org.