

## Questions from the SPC Community Regarding Pastoral Transition

### **1. How long will it take to find a new pastor? Why does it take so long to get a new pastor + an interim pastor?**

We anticipate 3 to 6 months to find and hire an Interim Pastor and an additional 1 to 2 years to search for the Called Pastor.

Our goal is to find a pastor who will further our individual and collective growth to enhance SPC's commitment to be a welcoming Christian community open to all. It is healthy for a church to allow adequate time for grieving Randy's departure and space to reassess what we want our SPC future to look like. Our Interim Pastor will be able to walk us through the interim stages and prepare us for the transition to a Called Pastor. SPC is a special place and we don't want to rush finding a Called Pastor simply to fill the position. We want the best fit for SPC and believe that taking the time to go through these stages readies us for the next stage in our future!

### **2. A national search? or just local?**

The Interim and Called Pastor will both be national searches.

### **3. What is the role of the Presbytery for our consideration for an Interim Pastor and, ultimately, a Called Pastor? How much control will the SPC congregation have in the selection of our next pastor?**

The PCUSA maintains a database of churches looking for pastors, and pastors looking for a call; our search committees will use this tool in developing candidate lists. Shenandoah Presbytery serve as an advisory role in our search process and candidate selection, and will conduct background checks on our final candidates.

### **4. Why doesn't the congregation hear the Called Pastor sermon before the person is hired?**

On recommendations from the Nominating Committee, the congregation elects our *Pastoral* Nominating Committee. This Committee develops a pool of candidates through formal and informal avenues within the denomination, reviews the applicants, holds interviews, attends a neutral site sermon, and finally recommends the final candidate.

Interim Search: The Session appointed the interim search committee and will make the final hiring decision for the interim position.

Called Pastor Search: The Called Pastor process includes a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) elected by the congregation. This committee is a representative one, youth to senior members as well as members that cover our areas of diversity. The members of the committee are entrusted to discern the best fit for our called pastor, in a process specified by our denomination and presbytery.

### **5. How do we replicate the person knowing we can't duplicate the person?**

We are looking for a candidate that shares our values and vision for the future of SPC. We will use the results of the CAT (Congregational Assessment Tool) with the input received in subsequent forums to communicate our values and vision to our Pastoral Nominating Committee. They will aggregate all of our information and discern the most appropriate candidate. They will then listen to a sermon at a neutral site. If they still feel this is the best fit for

our congregation and for the candidate, they will ask the Shenandoah Presbytery to vet the candidate.

#### **6. How do we get children and families involved?**

We encourage families to attend upcoming CAT and similar forums as we work through this process together. A concerted effort has been made to include all members of our church community including youth, young families, and our senior members in the leadership of the church. People with young families are members of the Session, on the Interim Search Committee, and are encouraged to be part of our assessment programs. The CAT team recently held a special session during a time that was convenient for young families. We will continue to look for opportunities for all SPC members to be part of the transition process.

#### **7. How will funerals be handled after Randy's departure?**

Until our Interim Pastor is in place, we have a team of SPC church leaders that will help guide a selected pastor who is a friend of the congregation. They will work with the family to make the service personal and unique to the individual being remembered.

#### **8. When are Session meetings?**

The Session ordinarily meets monthly and may meet more often or less often if appropriate. The date and time of each upcoming meeting is published in the Sunday bulletin, e-notices and on the church website. The Session meetings are open. If you are interested in a particular agenda item or have a question for the session please forward your inquiry to the Session Clerk, Suellen Myers.

#### **9. What is the exact Presbytery policy that requires Randy to separate himself from SPC when he retires?**

The Presbytery's "Departing Minister Policy" states that Randy may not participate in any SPC events or duties until at least one full year after the Called Pastor is installed. This restriction does not apply to his family. Randy was the primary author of this policy long before his retirement.