

# FAQ's regarding St. Pauls Transition and Pastoral Succession Plan

Q: Why do we need a transition plan?

A: The transitional period (often called the interim period) is by definition “the time in between”, though it is not a time of limbo or stagnation. It is a time of reflection and review, not just on our pastoral leadership but also on our church as a whole: our mission, our membership experience, our finances, our future. We also have to remember it will be a time of mourning as well –where we as a community acknowledge our sense of loss while we simultaneously begin looking to the future. Most importantly, this transitional time allows for a deliberate pastoral search, where we as a congregation take time to consciously define what we seek in our next senior pastor . . . and then we find a pastor who meets those needs. For all of this, we must have a plan.

Q: What is the Church Profile Committee and why do we need it? What is it doing and why is it necessary?

A. The Profile Committee was formed by the Executive Committee and affirmed by the Council in May, 2009 to do two things: (1) Get started working on responses to a UCC Denomination questionnaire that needs to be completed before a search begins. This document is called The Local Church Profile and (2) Take stock of where we are as a church at this point in time so we will be ready to think about where we want to go in the future. This report is called St. Pauls Today and Tomorrow—Important Conversations.

Q: What happens to these reports?

A: A profile of the congregation entitled *The Local Church Profile* will be created and submitted to the UCC. Candidates interested in applying for the Sr. Pastor role at St. Pauls will review this profile. This will help them determine if they want to apply. *St. Pauls Today and Tomorrow—Important Conversations* goes to the Executive Committee and the Council for review. Then it will be distributed to Congregation and Search Committee.

Q: Will people not on the profile committee have a chance to review the reports? If so, how?

A: The final *Local Church Profile* and *St. Pauls Today and Tomorrow—Important Conversations* will be shared with the congregation via the church website or in print form. In addition the Search Committee, the Council and some members of the Profile Committee will be facilitating “Listening and Dialogue” groups with the congregation throughout the summer and early fall to “listen” and “learn” what the congregation thinks is important for St. Pauls for its future. They will be using the St. Pauls Today and Tomorrow as the basis for the conversation. So, by the time the Search committee is ready to begin the formal search, it is doing so with the collective view of the congregation.

Q: What does the Search Committee do, and why will it take so long to hire a new senior pastor?

A: First, new senior pastors are most successful when there has been an intentional transition after a previous senior pastor has departed (especially when s/he had a long tenure); a transition period of 12-18 months is usually recommended. Second, the interview process has many steps, and these require a great deal of thoughtful deliberation, reflection, and time. Below is a general overview:

- the Sr. Pastor profile must be completed
- the Sr. Pastor profile is posted through the UCC

- potential candidates may be specifically identified and contacted
- candidates send their profiles to the Search Committee to review
- the Search Committee must select a sub-group of candidates for phone interviews
- final candidates will be selected and brought in for interviews.
- members from the Search Committee may wish to visit a church or churches of final candidates
- one candidate is chosen to be presented to the congregation
- the congregation must accept or reject this candidate, as per St. Pauls by-laws.

**Q: Why do we need a Search Committee? Why can't we just hire one of our terrific associate pastors right now and get on with it?**

**A:** St. Pauls is truly blessed to have two outstanding Associate Pastors, and both Pastor Ward and Pastor Carlson will be allowed to apply for the senior pastor position when we begin accepting profiles (resumes). In the meantime, we need to review and update the actual job description (Pastor Profile) and clarify the skills & gifts needed for this position. A church like St. Pauls deserves an exceptional Sr. Pastor, and this requires a thorough, national search. This search will provide a prayerful and deliberate approach to finding the best candidate to serve St. Pauls. If it turns out that one of our current Associate Pastors is chosen, then the congregation and that pastor will know that the decision was made based on the candidate's skills, gifts and being the best fit for St. Pauls.

**Q: How is the Search Committee constituted and appointed?**

**A:** The Church Council sought out individuals who represented the richness and diversity of the congregation and whose experience, both at St. Pauls and in other arenas, would be beneficial to the Search Committee process. The Church Council then nominated a slate of 14 candidates who were later approved by a congregational vote at our Annual Meeting, Sunday March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Search committee member profiles can be found on the website and the display board in the fellowship hall.

**Q: Do people not on the Search Committee have input into the process?**

**A:** Yes. In the coming months, members of the Search Committee, Profile Committee and Church Council will be hosting open conversations (focus groups) regarding the many elements of our church life at St. Pauls (worship, mission, finances, community, pastoral leadership, etc.) Members of the congregation will be able to share their ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future. A congregational survey will also allow additional input into the process, and will provide additional guidance to the search committee as they complete the Church Profile and begin the search process. Members may also submit nominations of potential candidates to the Search Committee in accordance with defined protocol (see Pastoral Search Committee Charter). Lastly, members of the congregation will have the ultimate say by voting to accept or reject the final candidate.

**Q: Who does the Search Committee report to?**

**A:** To protect the candidates and their churches, as well as to avoid rumors and confusion, the search committee shall maintain complete confidentiality regarding all candidates, except for periodic updates to the Congregation President. The committee will, however, provide monthly progress reports to the congregation.

Q: What happens to the Henrys after Tom retires? Do Tom and Colleen have any further relationship with St. Pauls after he retires?

A: It is customary in most denominations that the retiring pastor take leave of the church community permanently. However, we hope to find an arrangement that is both appropriate and respectful to both Tom and Colleen and the Transitional Pastor and future Senior Pastor. During the transitional period, Tom and Colleen will not attend regular worship at St. Pauls, though they are invited to join us for our holiday services, *How Sweet the Sound*, and services in which their grandchildren will be participating. Tom may perform funeral/memorial services when called upon and will assist with future endowment and estate planning/giving initiatives on behalf of St. Pauls. Colleen will continue her valuable work on the archive projects and just might slip into choir practice on occasion. This arrangement may be revisited once a new senior pastor is called.

Q: Will Tom receive Pastor Emeritus status in the future?

A: Yes, it is quite certain that this will be considered for Tom based on his faithful and exemplary leadership of St. Pauls for the past 36 years. An announcement regarding this honorary designation will be forthcoming.

Q: Why do we need a transitional senior pastor?

A: Following Tom's retirement, the work of St. Pauls and the life of our congregation will continue. Having a transitional senior pastor serve during the interim period will allow for this to happen.

Q: What does a transitional senior pastor do?

A: The transitional senior pastor is responsible for most of which Tom handles now, but he will also serve as an advisor and consultant on the transitional work: the church/pastor profiles, the actual search process, study of our current administrative structure, stewardship and budgeting, mission, and rummage sale. He will also serve on various committees, (Executive Committee, Church Council, Facilities, Finance, Worship, Communications) and will help St. Pauls congregation prepare for new pastoral leadership.

Q: Who does the transitional senior pastor report to?

A: The transitional senior pastor will report directly to the Executive Committee.

Q: What is the relationship between the transitional senior pastor and the pastoral, administrative and maintenance staffs?

A: The transitional senior pastor will serve in much the same capacity as did Tom Henry. He will lead the staff in all of the day-to-day operations of the church and will manage the administrative business of St. Pauls.

Q: When does the transitional senior pastor start and how long will he serve St. Pauls?

A: Reverend Ben Bishop will begin his time at St. Pauls on May 15<sup>th</sup>. During the 6 weeks prior to Tom's retirement, Ben's work will be relatively low-profile, focusing on getting to know the staff and the congregation, our administrative systems, committees and overall church operations. He and Tom will also be able to spend valuable time sharing and learning about our church community, our history and traditions and some of the challenges ahead. The length of time of Ben's service to St. Pauls will be determined by the results of the search process; however, 12-24 months might be a fair estimation. Additional information regarding Rev. Ben Bishop can be found on the website and display board in the fellowship hall.