



**Pulpit Search Committee**

*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven ~ Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Greetings from the Pulpit Search Committee.

I'm Deacon Lawrence Hibbert and I'm here to provide you with an important update on our search process.

As a reminder, our congregation appointed a Pulpit Search Committee to guide the church in succession planning after Pastor Soaries made his retirement announcement in July 2019. Over the ensuing months, the PSC engaged in surveys, focus groups, town halls, and prayer meetings to understand the desires, concerns, aspirations, and priorities of our church members. In parallel, we worked with our search firm, Vanderbloemen, to establish an applicant pool and identify a short-list of candidates to be vetted by the PSC.

After months of prayer, fasting, meetings, and consultation, the applicant pool of 238 candidates was narrowed to 10 candidates, from whom we selected 4 finalists. Each of the four finalists participated in an in-depth and rigorous 2-day interview process including a leadership assessment. The PSC met with each candidate to discuss their experience and qualifications, tour the church and the surrounding community, engage in case studies, and understand their approach to ministry.

Now, we are approaching the end of the evaluation process and will soon be prepared to provide the church with our recommended candidate for the next Senior Pastor.

We are trusting that this candidate has been called by God to join our church family and build on the legacy established by our past and current pastor. As is written in Jeremiah 3:15, the Lord said, "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding."

We anticipate announcing the name of the candidate at a time when the quarantine orders have been lifted and we return to services in the Church building.

Once back in the Church, the congregation will be given a chance to meet the candidate over a multi-day visit that will include their participation in prayer service, bible study, fellowship, and preaching on Sunday. We will announce the date of the election, to be held during a church business meeting, at least two consecutive Sundays before the election, per our bylaws.

As a reminder, only active church members can vote in elections. Please ensure that your membership profile is up to date in Faith In Action Central (FIAC).

Also, if you haven't kept up with the search process and need more information, you can contact any member of the PSC directly or email us at [psc@fbcsomerset.com](mailto:psc@fbcsomerset.com). You can also go to the Hearts We Win Leadership section of the website and find past updates.

Here are a few Frequently Asked Questions:

**Question 1 – Why aren't you revealing candidate names to the membership?**

It should be noted that all candidates are current Pastors with their own congregation. Like most, our search process offers candidates **confidentiality** so as not to disrupt their relationships with their current congregations. You've appointed PSC members to undertake this significant process and we remain in important conversations with the candidates. Once we're closer to being able to bring the final candidate to meet our congregation, we will offer information helpful for your decision-making.

**Question 2 – Why doesn't the PSC present multiple candidates and allow the church to choose?**

Under the church constitution, Article 9, Section 2 (The Call of the Pastor), only one candidate shall be presented by the Committee at Elections. This is consistent with the recommendation from Vanderbloemen and Baptist Convention. Ultimately, this practice ensures that elections don't create divides within the Church body.

**Question 3 - What were the key criteria considered as we look for a new Pastor?**

The PSC developed criteria and augmented it with vital information from the Voice of the Church activities. While we used several criteria, here are some of the key areas of evaluation including Preaching, Biblical and Theological Knowledge, Congregational and Community Care, Discipleship and Bible Study, Multi-generational appeal, and Leadership Style.

**Question 4 - What happens if the church doesn't like the candidate presented?**

The PSC has been prayerful, thoughtful, and deliberate in this search process, however, if the final candidate does not receive enough votes to become our next pastor, we will resume the search process to present a new candidate to the church.

**Question 5 – When will the Pastor-designate transition to our church?**

We are grateful to God for the leadership of Pastor Soaries' during this pandemic season. While Pastor Soaries's retirement is scheduled for November, there are too many factors predict an exact time for transition. We can promise you that Pastor Soaries has committed to remaining flexible with the transition date ensuring that the church remains in a stable place.



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Just as we've done throughout this process, we'll continue to update you as soon as possible about all significant developments. We thank you for your support and ask that you continue to pray for our current and future pastor, the PSC, the Soaries family, and our congregation. Thank you.

Lawrence Hibbert, Deacon  
Chairman Pulpit Search Committee

Ali Wilson, Trustee  
Vice Chairman Pulpit Search Committee