

Wednesday, October 03, 2007

FAQs

1. How do I submit questions or comments?

Please submit either by postal mail to the church office, email to transitioncommittee@lopca.org, or via the church's website at <http://www.lopca.org/transition.html> . All questions or comments must be submitted in writing so that your concerns are fairly and accurately represented and answered.

2. What's being done about Pastor Downing's retirement?

Your Session has formed a "transition" committee that will guide our steps toward the formation of a Pulpit Committee.

3. Who'll serve on the Transition Committee?

All of the Ruling Elders currently active on the Session will serve as the Transition Committee along with the Chairman of the Diaconate. Babe Ruth will serve as the Transition Committee's Chairman.

4. Why did Pastor Downing announce his retirement at this time?

<http://www.lopca.org/transition.html>

5. What has been Pastor Downing's involvement with the Transition Committee?

Pastor Downing has not been involved except to call a Special Session Meeting to "kick off" the process of forming the committee. To avoid any conflict of interest, no one on the Pastoral Staff or any employee on the church payroll will be involved. They'll cooperate with the Committee (answering questions, providing advice) but will not be directly involved in any decision making.

6. How long will it take to find a new senior pastor?

It could take as long as a year. Larger churches than ours have been told to expect it to take from 1-to-2 years after the senior pastor leaves. Extended periods of time such as these are needed and healthy especially when the departing senior pastor has had a long tenure. Others who have gone through this process advise us that the church will need time to get used to Pastor Downing not being here, before it can be ready to get used to a new pastor being here. Regardless of how long it takes, if we remain sensitive to God's will, the right man will be found at the right time.

7. How will the Pulpit Committee go about searching for a new pastor?

It is a blessing that we have a Presbyterian form of government as we move into this process. The provisions of our Book of Church Order will greatly enhance our ability for this transition to be smooth and orderly. One of the important principles of our form of government is **the congregation's right to choose** the pastor. Neither the Session nor the Transition Committee will determine exactly what happens. **The congregation will elect** a Pulpit Committee who will proceed toward the day when they present a recommendation upon which **the congregation will then vote**.

8. Who will decide who is on the Pulpit Committee? How do we determine who those candidates are?

It is customary to propose a slate of candidates to **the congregation for their approval** during a congregational meeting. The candidates will be selected through a process yet to be determined by the Session. The slate should be composed of officers and members-at-large representing various segments of the congregation.

9. When will the Pulpit Committee be formed?

This is a very important step. The Pulpit Committee should be formed one month before Pastor Downing leaves but, out of due respect, should not become actively engaged in the search process until he has left. With the proper attention given, the Pulpit Committee can get a lot done and be running at full speed the day after Lynn's departure.

10. When will I hear more?

We expect more questions to be asked and the answers to be eagerly and widely anticipated. Given that this is the first edition of "Frequently Asked Questions" concerning Pastor Downing's retirement, you may expect there to be later editions from the Transition Committee.