

Pilgrim Church
Special Church Council Meeting
June 26, 2016

Attending: Rev. Don Remick, Associate Conference Minister, MACUCC; Bruce Hadley, Moderator; Jim Garrett, treasurer; Lynne Devnew, clerk; Tom Brayer; Heather Edwards; Patti MacLennan; Bob Mustard; Drew Thawley, Nancy Von Stackelberg, Sandy Von Stackelberg

The special meeting was scheduled following our 9 AM service and celebratory fellowship time because Don Remick was at Pilgrim for Todd's last Sunday at Pilgrim. It seemed wise to take advantage of Don's presence to allow him to share his guidance and perspective with us about moving forward.

Focus of the Interim Process

Don began by reviewing with us the three questions that will be the focus of the new church profile and the interim process. They are:

- 1) **Who are we...**our identity, historical strengths and patterns, our assets, our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges
- 2) **Who is our neighbor...**who are the people who live in the neighborhoods where church members live, what are their longings, fears, hopes, dreams and spiritual needs. While it is important to develop a deeper awareness of the people in neighborhoods around the church, the needs of those around the globe should also be included in this exploration and discussion.
- 3) **What is God Calling us to be and do....**Based on the insights from the previous questions and grounded in prayer, discern a plan for the next 3 – 7 years.

The exit interview with Todd had recently been completed. Don reminded us that this is just one piece of information to be used to determine who we are now and to see what we've learned about our congregation and our relationship to our pastor. Our interim minister will help us with the "who we are" question, but he or she will first need to spend time getting to know us. Then we have to do a congregational assessment before we can begin visioning. We might or might not need to use outside sources to supplement our interim minister through each of these steps.

The new profile is asking a task of the interim that wasn't being done before (going through the visioning process to discern what God is calling us to be and do). The classical process has been 18 months; because of where we are, ours might actually take an additional year.

A new philosophy

Don observed that in most churches today there is an expectation that the minister is the performer, God is the prompter, and the congregation is the audience and needs to be entertained. (An entertainment expectation). Don suggested that this should change so that the congregation is the performer, the minister is the prompter, and God is the audience. He observed one of the roles of the interim period is to shift our thinking from the former to the latter stance.

- It was observed that Todd has been transitioning us to think about what we are doing here.
- Maintenance of the church/congregation is just a means to the end.

Our Associate Pastor

Don was asked how we might consider Emily as we think about the future.

We are blessed that Emily is committed to being with us, at a minimum through our church mission trip to New Orleans next summer. We all love having her at Pilgrim; we don't know whether her objectives are to remain an associate minister as she is so wonderful with the youth, or if she wants to lead her own congregation. We recognize that if she wants to lead her own congregation and we were to call Emily to be our senior pastor, we would be her first church and she has no experience managing a complex organization. We anticipate she will have some great learning experiences working with our interim minister.

Don observed that the success rate for converting associates to senior ministers isn't high, but noted that there are two approaches that can be used if a congregation and associate minister are interested in that. He observed that merely having the associate minister submit a profile as one of the pool being considered for call can be expected to pose huge problems in the congregation if the associate isn't chosen.

- One model that can be considered is to make the decision before publishing the call as to whether to call the associate pastor. If the associate pastor has expressed interest in the position and isn't called, the associate should then leave the congregation.
- The other model is for the associate pastor to leave a year or so before the call will be opened and then compete by submitting a profile when the opening is announced.

Communicating

We spent the rest of the time together focusing on how to help calm the concerns of the congregation. People are naturally anxious to rush towards stability and we have had negative interim minister experiences. However, there are lots of people in the congregation at different status points who need to be brought together to do God's work. Many say "I know what I want in our new pastor"; however, we agreed that most of us would have different answers if we were to articulate what we want.

We need to help anchor people in the process, rather than in a person. The congregation's buy-in is important. The process is to reach a point of internal stability and then do visioning.

- Note that we have lots of stability on our boards and committees and we need to convey that to the congregation
- Convey that we know and trust the process.
- We need to communicate how the process is different from the prior interim process (focus is on creating stability and visioning rather than on stirring things up).
- Encourage the boards and committees to help us share our confidence in the process

Don Remick will preach on July 24 to help us with the communication process.