

# **BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ Sheet)**

**Surrounding Pastor's Recent Retirement Announcement**

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**CONGREGATIONAL CARE**

**Q: How will ongoing pastoral care and support be provided during the transition?**

A: When the position of Pastor of Bethlehem become vacant, ongoing Pastoral care and support will be provided by the Deacon Kinfolk Ministry and Associate Ministers of the Church.

**Q: Who will officiate funeral, wedding, and baptisms after the Pulpit is vacant?**

A: When the pulpit becomes vacant funerals, weddings, and baptisms, will be officiated by an Ordained Minister of the Gospel appointed by the Chair of the Deacon Ministry. Only Ordained Ministers in a member's family will be considered to officiate a funeral or a wedding upon submission of a copy of his or her ordination credentials.

**Q: Who will administer Communion on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays?**

A: Ordained Ministers of the Gospel in the local area not seeking the pastorate of Bethlehem will be invited at the discretion of the Deacon Chair to administer Holy Communion.

**CHURCH OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT**

**Q: What is the order or process of handling business (getting approvals, facilitating funerals, etc.) during the search process?**

A: At this time, there will be no change in processes of handling Bethlehem's day to day business during this period.

**PASTORAL**

**Q: Will Pastor White receive a pension?**

A: Yes, as part of Pastor White's compensation package, a pension plan was established through the American Baptist Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board.

**Q: Will Bethlehem celebrate Pastor's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Pastor & People Day) in June?**

A: Yes, we will celebrate Pastor's twenty-five (25) years of service to the congregation on Pastor & People Day.

**Q: What happens with the Pastor's house in the interim? What happens to the Church's car in the interim?**

A: Pastor's home is the property of Pastor White. The Church's car belongs to Bethlehem and is part of the BBC vehicle fleet.

### **Position of Interim Pastor**

**Q: Will there be Interim Pastoral leadership during the transition period?**

A: The church and its leadership is encouraged to bring in an Interim Pastor to provide stability, spiritual guidance, and support to the congregation during Pastoral vacancy. Ordained clergy who offer themselves for this work are older seasoned pastors who have wisdom to offer and yet he or she have no desire to return to the pastorate. Consequently, it is important that clear and concise duties and responsibilities are developed to insure the integrity of the position and the integrity of the Bethlehem Baptist Church in the larger Christian community.

**Q: Who will serve as interim pastor?**

A: Candidates desiring to serve as Interim Pastor must first meet the qualifications and agree to the criteria and duties established by the Joint Leadership. The position of Interim Pastor is a temporary position held by an ordained minister who understand before applying that he or she will not be considered for the pastorate of the Church as this poses a conflict of interest to the work of the Pastoral Discernment (Search) Committee and the integrity of the overall process. The final decision on an Interim Pastor requires a vote by the church body during a business meeting.

**Q: Will Pastor White assist with selecting the Interim Pastor?**

A: No. Pastor White has expressed that he will not provide assistance in the selection of the Interim Pastor. The selection of an Interim Pastor is subject to a church vote.

## Position of Assistant to the Pastor

### **Q: What will happen with the Assistant to the Pastor Position when Pastor White retires?**

A: Two (2) Assistant to the Pastor positions were created in 2017 to assist the Pastor in the day-to-day congregational care and administrative duties. Pastor White clearly explained the difference between these created positions... "Assistants **TO** the Pastor, as opposed to the traditional Assistant Pastor of a Church. By virtue of the office of Pastor becoming vacant at Pastor White's retirement, both Assistant to the Pastor positions will dissolve because the church will not have a Pastor for the Assistants to assist in ministry. The current Assistant to the Pastor will return to serving in the capacity of Associate Minister of Bethlehem...

### **Q: Can the Position of Assistant to the Pastor serve as Interim Pastor? Can the Assistant to the Pastor apply for the position of Pastor?**

A: Yes. However, if the Assistant to the Pastor apply for the position of Interim Pastor, he cannot apply for the position of Pastor (Please see rationale described in above question). Yes, the Assistant to the Pastor can apply for the position of Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

### **Q: Will the Assistant to the Pastor be the automatic front-runner for pastorate?**

A: No, in this serious matter the congregation must be prayerful and led by the Holy Spirit. According to the Church By-Laws, there are no front-runners for the position of Pastor at BBC. The congregation and the candidates must trust the Lord and the process.

## SEARCH/DISCUSSION COMMITTEE

### **Q: When will the search (discernment) process begin?**

A: The selection process for the next Pastor of Bethlehem will begin when the pulpit become vacant.

### **Q: Who will serve on the Pastoral Discernment (selection) Committee?**

A: According to the current Bethlehem Baptist Church By-Laws, the following constitute the makeup of the Pulpit Search Committee: Deacon Chair; Trustee

Chair; Sunday School Superintendent; and six (6) members elected from the Church membership.

**Q: Will Pastor White have input/influence on the selection of the new Pastor?**

A: No, Pastor White will not have input/influence in the selection of the new Pastor.

**Q: Will the Church hire a search firm or consultant to manage the search process? Will the BBC HR Committee manage the process?**

A: No. A search firm will not be hired for such a spiritual matter. No, the BBC Human Resources Committee will not manage the process. The Church will follow the guidelines listed in the Church's By-Laws.

**Q: How will the search process take place and will there be open Communications during the process?**

A: The search (discernment) process will be outlined for the congregation at a later date. Leadership has already created several vital committees to undergird and support the search process. The makeup and work of these committees will be carried out by a team made up of officers and members who bring spiritual gifts, abilities, and passion to the particular subject matter. Open communication is critical to an effective process. To this end, a "Communications" sub-committee has been created with the expressed purpose of insuring that the congregation is kept abreast, informed, and spiritually encouraged throughout the process--beginning tonight! The other committees at this time are: Congregational Care; Consultants & Facilitators; Pastoral Discernment Team A & B; Leadership; Communications; Church Operation & Management; & Bethlehem Constitution & By-laws Committee. More committees are forthcoming pending congregation input.

**Q: What is the criteria to be a member of a Committee?**

A: Members who have been a part of the vision and mission of the church. Persons who have served on ministries, committees, and who bring knowledge around the specific committee subject matter. An understanding of policy and procedures is helpful.

**Q: When do the committees become active?**

A: Several of the committees will become active immediately. Others will become active as the process takes shape. A better grasp on a timeline will be shared at the next family meeting when the Leadership assigned to each committee will have had time to build their directory. Again, a sign up list is posted in the fellowship tonight.

**Q: At what point will Pastor White reclude himself from the search process?**

Answer: Pastor has no plans to be a part of the Search (Discernment) Process. Pastor White understands his role at this time to be that of providing wisdom, counsel, and spiritual guidance until his retirement. Unbeknownst to many, the Discernment (Search) process is a spiritual journey the congregation must take with God and God alone.

**Q: How will the search for a new Pastor be conducted?**

A: When the pulpit becomes vacant, the search for a Pastor will be conducted as outlined in the Church's Constitution By-Laws.

**Q: Will Bethlehem consider a Female Pastor?**

A: Yes. The committee will consider all qualified candidates for the position of Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

**Q: What role will Pastor White have in the transition process and the selection of his successor?**

A: Pastor will not have a role in the transition process nor the selection of Bethlehem's next Pastor.

God says in Jeremiah 3:15, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

## **PERSONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE PASTOR**

**Q: Did Pastor White indicate to the congregation why he has decided to retire and when?**

A: Yes, Pastor White in his letter read on Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup> indicated the factors that lead to his decision to retire. An official copy of the letter is available for review in the Trustee office.