



Process as required by the by-laws of Westwood Baptist Church

The Senior Pastor is responsible for providing leadership to all areas of the church, leading it to be an effective, Biblically-functioning community, giving particular attention in four areas: 1) preaching and teaching, 2) vision and leadership, 3) evangelism, and 4) pastoral care. A Senior Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given. A Senior Pastor Selection Task Team shall be elected by the church according to the Senior Pastor Search Policy to seek out God's will for a Senior Pastor, and bring its recommendation to the church. Election shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for issuing a call. The Senior Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his resignation or at the request of the church.

Learn

Under the authority of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Executive Staff and the Church Council with input from the church body, the Pastor Search Team began a spiritual journey to find a Senior Pastor for Westwood Baptist Church on May 18, 2016. The team consisted of Tim Carrigan, Mike West, Shawn Sandlin, John Morris, Vinny Chiaramonte, Topper Reid (staff representative), Lisa Dorough, Barbara Haynie and Martha Earwood. We all signed a covenant to seek God's will through His word, by faithful prayer, with honest communication, keeping each other accountable and a commitment to total unity. We all accepted this responsibility in humility, knowing that we were being asked to walk in total submission to God's will in obedience of faith, devoid of personal biases and preconceived ideas or agendas. This journey was framed within a process: **Learn, Discern, Seek and Select.**

As a team we quickly learned about each other, our roles on the team and our gifts and talents. We agreed to meet 2 times each week throughout the Learn phase. Our learn process included: outside counsel, prayer, scripture, books, examining the search process of other reputable churches and transfer of pertinent knowledge from the last search team. Using the Biblical model from Titus and 1 Timothy and following our church bylaws we shared with the congregation a document that would be called our *Biblical Requirements* for Senior Pastor. Additionally, we conducted guided individual meetings with each member of the pastoral and leadership staff to learn their perspectives on the ministries of Westwood and the needs for the future. We conducted a congregational survey and we received 260 responses by the July 17th deadline.

Discern

In the Discern phase we evaluated all of the information gathered and developed specific guidelines for our next senior pastor and shared with the church our *Senior Pastor* profile. In addition, we developed a detailed profile to be used as our tool for evaluating candidates. All candidates both internal and external would be evaluated through the lens of this tool. The tool was an extensive, 4-part job description including *Biblical Qualifications*, *Pastor Requirements* based on Westwood bylaws, *Search Team Requirements* based on Baptist Faith & Message and expectations of our leadership document and *Westwood Guidelines for a Prospective Pastor* based on characteristics, facts with PST decided priorities and preferences. Each item in the tool weighted the preference to determine where we had flexibility and where we had no flexibility. These guidelines included things like experience, education and giftedness. At the completion of the Discern phase we informed the church we were ready to accept resumes beginning July 10, 2016.

Seek

In the Seek phase we accepted over 140 resumes. Every resume was reviewed in the context of the Pastoral Guidelines. We conducted an initial review to narrow the list of candidates to a more workable list. While it seemed likely from beginning that we would be responding to the possibility of internal candidates, it was not until the time that resumes were submitted that it was confirmed that we had 2 internal candidates to consider. We had much discussion, prayer and debate on how to approach this part of the process and how to graciously respond to both candidates. We realized that this was very different than typical pastor searches as these were beloved and loyal staff members. After receiving wise counsel we decided to give consideration to both candidates, fully vetting the process to determine if either one could be our next Senior Pastor. All the potential outcomes were discussed at length and in detail. Over several weeks, still meeting at least 2 times each week, we had heart felt and highly detailed conversations, with the goal of leaving no stone unturned in the evaluation of candidates, both internal and external. We leaned heavily on specific passages of scripture regarding God's will, we prayed earnestly and fervently for the revelation of God's will and the movement of His Spirit. As a team, we agreed that we would consider the internal candidates first. Following a time of careful evaluation, we determined that God's leading our team to continue with a more in depth consideration of Kenneth Bruce for our Senior Pastor.

By July 26th we concluded that the most prudent step going forward was to recommend to the Executive Staff and Church Council to employ a Transitional Pastor to fulfill teaching responsibilities each week. The purpose of this decision was two-fold: 1.) avoid the appearance of "posturing" by internal candidates in order to have a process that was above reproach and 2.) lead the congregation to join together in unity to walk in obedience of faith in following the leadership of their next Senior Pastor.

Select

We entered the Select phase in early August fully committed to listening to the leading of the Holy Spirit for every step. Through prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit, we committed to a "one-step-at-time" approach. At the conclusion of every step, our team met and prayed before deciding to take the next step to determine if Kenneth should be our next Senior Pastor. Taking into consideration all aspects of the Biblical Qualifications and Guidelines we evaluated the candidate's character, qualifications, and prior ministry experience. We interviewed the candidate in 5 lengthy meetings over 8+ hours, prayerfully considering whether or not to move forward with him as a candidate after each meeting. We conducted a full background check, contacted ministerial references, and solicited his response to questions of theology, doctrine, and the Westwood polity and bylaws.

As a team, we have by faith now arrived at a point of being able to say in full confidence and unity that the Lord has lead us to select Kenneth Bruce as the next Senior Pastor at Westwood Baptist Church. We have come to this conclusion as we have trusted God to reveal His will to us through His word, prayer, affirmation through questioning, in depth interviews, and background checks. We humbly ask our church family to join us as we walk in obedience of faith to bring Kenneth Bruce into the role of Senior Pastor at Westwood Baptist Church.