

# Intentional Interim Status Report: Questions and Answers

Sunday, March 30, 2014

The interim period began 7 months ago with the departure of the Hoffmans. The intentional interim began 4 months ago with Dr. Hunt's arrival as Intentional Interim Pastor. How are things going? What lies ahead? Here are some answers to these and other questions.

## **Question: What's makes an interim "intentional"?**

**Answer:** What makes an interim intentional is the commitment to use the time between pastors as an opportunity for congregational development. The period between pastors isn't just a necessary evil to get through as quickly as possible; it's a strategic turning point with significant potential all its own. During the interim, we remain actively engaged in ongoing ministries while giving special attention the following things:

1. **Coming to terms with our history (Heritage):** This involves celebrating the heritage of Third Baptist, grieving the departures of pastor and other staff, and letting go of old expectations, wounds, patterns, and baggage of the past.
2. **Refreshing our mission, vision, and values (Mission):** This involves a fresh look at the 2011 Strategic Plan and a renewal of our shared sense of why we exist and what our priorities will be in the years ahead.
3. **Reflecting on leadership and organizational needs (Leadership):** This involves evaluating organizational structures, communication systems, and decision-making processes, and cultivating new leaders to come alongside existing leaders.
4. **Reaffirming and strengthening our connections with partners in ministry (Connections):** We do this by calling attention to and celebrating our relationships with congregational, denominational, and community-serving partners and evaluating how we can maximize the potential of these partnerships
5. **Preparing for the next pastor and the next chapter in the life of the church (Future):** We do this by supporting the work of the Pastor Search Committee and preparing for the arrival of the next pastor and the transition from the interim period to the next chapter of the church's life.

## **Question: Who does the work of the intentional interim process?**

**Answer:** The goal is to involve everyone. The Church Council, with Dr. Hunt as coach, serves as facilitator, coming up with creative ways to engage the congregation in each stage of the process. To distinguish its regular work from its interim work, the council is using the name "Transition Team" to refer to its work as intentional interim facilitator.

## **Question: Is there an estimated time frame for moving through intentional interim stages?**

**Answer:** It's not possible to predict precisely how the 5 stages will unfold; but the Church Council as "Transition Team" initially laid out a calendar of focus-months related to the stages, recognizing that in some cases, our work on these stages will continue beyond the focus months. The calendar of focus months has already been revised once. Here's what it looks like now:

- Heritage: January – March
- Mission: April – May
- Leadership: September 2013 – May 2014
- Connections: Summer
- Future: To Be Determined (based on when a new pastor is selected)

**Question: What have we done so far? What’s on the horizon?**

**Answer:** Here’s a look at what has happened, what is happening, and what will be happening related to each of the stages of the intentional interim

• **Heritage**

Related to this stage:

- We’ve been enjoying member testimonies during Sunday morning worship.
- The church’s annual dinner gave us a chance to celebrate last year’s ministries in the midst of disruptive change.
- Deacons and pastoral staff are currently involved in a plan of caring for inactive and disaffected members.
- Plans are underway for dinner fellowship groups.
- The March 30 Interim Time Table Talk was designed to facilitate celebration and healing.

• **Mission**

During April and May, we will be doing multiple things to promote congregational conversation about our mission, core values, and vision:

- First, members will be encouraged to complete a *Reflection Questionnaire* related to the church’s mission, values, and vision. This questionnaire will be broadly distributed, and members will be encouraged to complete it and turn it in by May 15.
- Second, we will be getting members to complete the sentence – “*We’re the kind of church that...*” – in as many different ways as they can imagine, looking for illustrations in the life of the church that speak to our mission, values, and future priorities (For example: “We’re the kind of church that...serves our surrounding community”; “We’re the kind of church that...devotes personnel resources to children and youth because of their importance to us.”) Special note cards are being created to facilitate the process, and member responses will be displayed in special locations around the church.
- By the end of May, the Transition Team will analyze responses to the Questionnaire and the “We’re the Kind of Church...” Campaign, do some of its own reflecting, and present to the church a consensus statement about our shared sense of mission, the values that mean the most to us, and congregational priorities for the future. This will be clarifying not only for the church in general, but also for Pastor Search Committee, given that they will want to look for a pastor that’s a fit for TBC.

• **Leadership**

Third Baptist has already done and is continuing to do some very significant work related to this stage:

- Maria Stinnett was called as Associate Pastor, Children and Communications.

- Search committees are currently engaged in searches for ministers in the areas of youth/community outreach and music/worship.
  - The Nominating Committee presented and the church elected leaders for important lay positions of the church. Those elected represent a healthy balance of seasoned and new leaders.
  - An ad hoc committee dealt with concerns related to personnel practices; their recommendations led to church council action; the church has now approved the creation of a Personnel Committee; the Nominating Committee is identifying potential committee members for election by the church.
  - Position descriptions for employees are being clarified, and steps are being taken to implement healthy supervision and evaluation practices.
  - The newly formed Personnel Committee will be updating personnel-related policies and procedures.
- **Connections**  
 Planning has yet to be done in this area, but it will involve such things as the following (some of which already happen as a normal part of the church's life):
    - Making use of denominational resources: staff, programs, facilities, literature, training, and retreats.
    - Identifying common interests of the congregation and partner organizations.
    - Having denominational and community ministries and programs lifted up in newsletters or during mission moments in worship.
    - Developing a plan for member representation in denominational and community initiatives.
  - **Future**  
 As the church approaches the time when it welcomes a new pastor, some of the following possibilities will be considered to support the transition:
    - Planning ways of introducing the new pastor (and accompanying family) to the congregation and wider community.
    - Developing a special worship service that brings good closure to the interim time
    - Establishing a Pastoral Relations Committee.
    - Having a skilled outside person conduct a review with the intentional interim pastor and church council, reflecting on the learnings of the transition period.

**Question: How is the pastor search process affected by the intentional interim process?**

**Answer:** For the Pastor Search Committee to know *the kind* of pastor God has in mind for the church, it's important for there to be clarity about the church's mission, core values, and priorities for the future. Understandably, then, the Pastor Search Committee is waiting on congregational input that will be coming during the April-May "Mission" stage to solidify its thinking and develop a Pastor Profile that it will use when identifying and evaluating candidates. In the mean time, the Search Committee is doing important preliminary work to organize itself for the process of searching for, selecting, and welcoming the next pastor.