

Beloved brothers and sisters,

Over the past several weeks, I have heard a number of thoughtful questions concerning our pastoral transition. I appreciate those questions because they reflect the love that this congregation has for its future and the desire to understand the process that lies ahead.

I believe that clarity produces confidence, and confidence strengthens unity.

First, let me address the process itself.

Our church has a clear and established process for pastoral selection and election. The Official Board has the responsibility of prayerfully considering and voting on the pastoral recommendation, and the congregation ultimately ratifies that decision. This process reflects both spiritual leadership and congregational affirmation. It honors the order that has guided this ministry while ensuring that the entire church family participates in this important moment in our history.

Second, there have been questions regarding the timing of the transition.

The actual pastoral transition will take place next year, and the formal date will be announced no later than January of 2027. This intentional timeline provides stability, preparation, and clarity for the congregation, our leaders, and the future pastor. We want this process to be orderly, prayerful, and free from unnecessary speculation or uncertainty.

Another question that has been raised is, "Why does this process require so much time when your own transition occurred within only thirty days?"

That is a fair question.

When I assumed the pastorate, my father had reached a point of readiness for retirement and had complete confidence in the transition

that was taking place. Yet, in looking back, thirty days was simply not enough time to fully prepare the congregation, to strengthen confidence across every ministry area, and to allow for the kind of thoughtful engagement that a healthy transition deserves.

God was gracious to us, and He sustained us through that season, but wisdom teaches us that what was necessary in one generation does not necessarily represent the ideal pattern for another.

The complexity of ministry today is significantly different than it was eighteen years ago. The responsibilities facing the Church, the challenges confronting our communities, and the opportunities before this ministry require a more deliberate and intentional approach.

Most importantly, this extended period is not merely for organizational preparation; it is for spiritual preparation.

The next pastor must have adequate time to hear from God.

The calling to shepherd a congregation of this magnitude and legacy cannot be rushed. It must be confirmed through prayer, discernment, counsel, and conviction. The person who assumes this sacred responsibility must know, beyond any doubt, that God has called and assigned them to this work.

Likewise, the congregation must have confidence that this decision is rooted in God's direction rather than human expediency.

This season, therefore, is designed to build confidence on every side.

It strengthens the confidence of the congregation in the process.

It strengthens the confidence of the leadership in the future.

And it strengthens the confidence of the next pastor, who must enter this assignment knowing that they have heard from God and have been given the time, support, and preparation necessary to lead effectively.

As we move forward, I ask that we continue to do what this church has always done: pray together, trust God together, encourage one another, and protect the unity of the Spirit.

The Lord has guided this congregation through every season of its ninety-plus years, and He will certainly guide us through this one.

And because He has been faithful in our past, we can be assured that He will be faithful in our future.