



ANCHOR  
— CHURCH —

## Succession Plan Overview

While a season of leadership transition can be daunting, even unsettling for some in any church family, these seasons can also bring a unifying sense of anticipation and expectation for God's Spirit to lead us into his plans for our future. The elders and staff of Anchor Church, including our Lead Pastor and his wife, Kris and Joanne Hassanpour, believe that the history of unity and health within our church family will serve as a strong foundation as we transition to a new Lead Pastor. We also believe that having made it through the few years of rebuilding post-Covid, we are once again gaining strength and momentum as a church, making this an ideal time to discover who God will call to lead our church into the next season of Gospel ministry in Hampton Roads.

We are grateful that this succession is not forced or sudden, but that Pastor Kris has generously brought us into this process early and has expressed his desire to remain as the Lead Pastor until the end of 2023 unless we find a new Lead Pastor before that date. He will continue leading and preaching throughout the transition, and he has expressed his desire to remain a partner of Anchor Church once the transition takes place. This represents the kind of authentic and transparent leadership that we have come to appreciate under the care and leadership of Pastor Kris. Given that most church plants do not survive the first 3-5 years and that the average tenure of a pastor today is between 3-5 years, we acknowledge the unusual blessing of being able to celebrate 10 years as a church family with the same Lead Pastor for over 10 years! We have truly enjoyed an extended season of foundation-laying that we believe will enable our church to have an even stronger foundation upon which to build and grow for generations to come.

At present, Anchor Church is flourishing under the leadership of our elders and staff. While we always see room for improvement, we believe that the various ministries of Anchor Church are growing along with the number of guests on Sundays, the number of leaders being raised up, and the number of partners joining our church. We are entering 2023 with a strong financial budget because 2022 was our second-best year financially in the history of our church. In addition to the quantitative measurements for growth, we are seeing qualitative signs of health and growth in our church, as well, as indicated by stories we are hearing from leaders, partners, and guests. Our church continues to enjoy a spirit of unity on Sundays and within our groups. Our groups continue to be outposts for reaching neighbors, and our people are growing in Christlike attributes of Servants and Missionaries. Our staff receives stories of hospitality and care from guests who attend our services and from community service organizations where our people volunteer. Our youth group is growing year after year, and other initiatives like our Prayer Team are taking root within our church family. Each of us has every reason to believe that God has laid a foundation of the Gospel in our church that is bearing fruit and that our church is being prepared by God's Spirit for even more fruit as we continue to follow his leading.

In order to best discern the leading of God's Spirit, the elders have created a temporary pastor search team to serve our church family during the succession process. The search team is comprised of elders, staff, and partners in the church who have demonstrated a commitment to the theology and culture of Anchor Church and will work to ensure that we find a Lead Pastor who is a good cultural fit for our church as well as a theological fit. The pastor search team will be responsible for communicating regularly with the church and will handle the logistics of collecting applications, interviewing candidates, gathering input from the congregation, and making a final recommendation to the elders for the installation of our new pastor. Once the new Lead Pastor is hired, the pastor search team will disband, having served its intended purpose of assisting the elders with the oversight of this process.

## **Roles and Responsibilities Overview**

The Elders of Anchor Church will:

- Lead Partner Fellowships and any Prayer Meetings
- Receive input from the Partners of Anchor Church
- Work with the Pastor Search Team to communicate regularly with the church
- Continue to Lead, Feed, Know, and Protect (*Shepherd Leader* by Witmer)

The Pastor Search Team will:

- Assist the Elders with leading the pastoral search process including reviewing applications, conducting interviews, gathering input from the partners of the church, and making the final recommendation to the elders
- Maintain confidentiality during the collection of applications and initial stages of interviewing. Due to the sensitive nature of the search process, the team may discover personal information about candidates that may need to remain confidential. Also, the team will likely be considering candidates who are still on staff at another church. It is not ethical to allow the names of the candidates to be public until the final stage.
- Assist the church with direction for how to care for the outgoing and incoming pastor near the end of the transition. Lead the effort to honor the work of the Hassanpours, and lead the effort to host a welcoming service for the incoming pastor.
- Disband after the new pastor is hired

The Partners of Anchor Church will:

- Earnestly Pray for their leaders
- Eagerly Participate in Partner Fellowships and Prayer meetings
- Band together in unity to support the outgoing and incoming Lead Pastors and their families
- Continue to Live, Give, Serve, Grow, and Go so that the Gospel flourishes in our church and community during this season

## Outlining the Pastor Search Process

- 1) For the rest of 2023, our church will host a Partners Fellowship every 2 months for encouragement, worship, prayer, and updates. We will also encourage a day of prayer and fasting at least 1-2 times over the next several months. Our Pastor Search Team members will be visiting community groups over the next few months to encourage our groups with prayer and updates.
- 2) The Pastor Search Team will establish two roles among themselves to share the load: Interview Coordinator as the primary point of contact for pastoral candidates, and Church Communication Coordinator as the primary point of contact for our church family. At each partner's fellowship, the Pastor Search Team will be transparent regarding the process and any progress being made.
- 3) The pastor search process will begin with the elders reaching out to our network of pastors and leaders within Acts 29 and Leaders Collective for any recommendations. We will also follow up on any recommendations that our partners make. We want to leverage the connections that our church leaders and church partners have before receiving a flood of applications from job postings on the internet.
- 4) The Pastor Search Team will review each recommendation before reaching out to them. Once the team agrees on which candidates to consider, the interview coordinator will reach out to them with an introduction and an invitation to prayerfully consider filling out an application for the role of Lead Pastor. The interview coordinator will stay in touch with each candidate until either party, the team or the candidate, decides to discontinue the process for any reason.
- 5) Once an application has been submitted, the Pastor Search Team will review the application, follow up with the references given, and notify the applicant of the decision to either continue the process or not.
- 6) With each applicant that is approved to continue, we will conduct an initial interview over Zoom with the Pastor Search Team.
- 7) Once all initial interviews are conducted, the Pastor Search Team will determine which candidates to follow up with in person by inviting them to interview in person one weekend and attend Anchor as a guest that Sunday.
- 8) If, at the end of this process, no suitable fit has been determined by the Pastor Search Team, we will start over again with additional recommendations and also post the job opening online with several pastoral search firms. We will follow the same process of collecting recommendations and applications, reviewing them, and communicating with candidates.
- 9) Any applicants that are approved to continue into the next phase will be invited back to preach for Anchor Church.
- 10) If, after preaching in view of a call, a candidate is approved to continue through this step and becomes a final candidate, the Pastor Search Team will communicate with the partners of Anchor Church, prayerfully consider any input from the church, and make a final invitation for the candidate to return to Virginia Beach for another opportunity to preach on Sunday, to meet with the staff and leaders, and to attend a partners fellowship.
- 11) After this step in the process, the Pastor Search Team will lead the way in receiving feedback or input from the congregation before making a final recommendation to the

elders. At this time, the elders will also receive input from other advisors and mentors listed below before making a final decision.

- 12) After prayer and consideration of all of the input they've received, and after gaining a sense of what it seems the Holy Spirit might be leading, the Pastor Search Team will make a recommendation to the elders for a final vote. Although they will take input from the partners of Anchor Church, the advisory team, and leaders within Acts 29 and Leaders Collective, the elders are responsible for voting to make a decision to call a new pastor.
- 13) Once the elders have offered the position of lead pastor to a candidate, and once the candidate has accepted the offer, the church will be notified and a date of hire will be announced. The church will begin to make arrangements for welcoming the incoming pastor and his family at that time.

Books, Resources, and Mentors Consulted in the development of this plan:

- Scriptural examples of transitions of leadership
- Pastors are People, Too by Dodd and Magnuson
- NEXT: Pastoral Succession by Vanderbloemen
- Leadership Transitions by Barna Group
- Leadership and Church Size Dynamics by Tim Keller
- Bill Dumphy in Williamsburg, VA
- Matt Morgan in Reston, VA
- Elliot Grudem in Raleigh, NC
- Matt Schoolfield in Raleigh, NC
- Brian Laughlin in Richmond, VA
- Doug Logan in Richmond, VA

Search Team will Create and Compile Documents for Partners:

- Job Description and Profile for Lead Pastor
- Profile of Anchor Church
  - Description of Purpose, Strategy, Values, Theological And Cultural Distinctives
  - Hopes for Future Growth and Development
- Updated Budget and Anticipated Cost for Pastor Search

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