



October 2, 2026

Dear Hopeful,

As you know, a few weeks ago Pastor Blair announced his retirement date of June 6, 2027. He has done a wonderful job serving Hopeful for the past 30 years; that's quite an accomplishment!

The announcement was the first step to kicking off a call process. The next step is to hold a congregational workshop scheduled for Saturday, November 14, 2026, in the Fellowship Hall from 9 AM until 3:30 PM. We encourage all members to participate; the workshop will be led by the Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Jess Abbott of the NALC. There will be an overview of the process, a devotional, and small group breakout sessions. We will feed you!

The workshop is the congregation's opportunity to provide input and insight into the future state of Hopeful and our search for a new pastor. We will be using this information from the workshop to create a Congregational Profile. We will be providing lunch and will need a headcount. Please sign up on the Hopeful Church website or call the church office. The deadline to sign up is Friday, October 30, 2026.

Once the workshop is completed, the feedback is reviewed to create Hopeful's Congregational Profile. The profile is posted on the NALC's website and sent out to all pastors within the NALC.

What to expect going forward and timelines:

Step 1

Congregational Workshop scheduled for November 14, 2026, meal included
9 AM - 3:30 PM, led by Pastor Jess

Step 2

Council to create Teams:

Celebration Team by the end of November 2026

Search Team by the end of January 2027

Step 3

Complete the Congregation Profile by the end of February 2027

Begin the search for candidates on March 1, 2027

Step 4

Personnel Team performs initial screening of candidates

Search Team (5 people) responsible for 2nd phase of the interview process

Step 5

Introducing candidates to congregation

The process to call a new pastor could take 3 to 18 months. We want to thoughtfully call a new pastor to meet the current and future needs of Hopeful. The Personnel Team and Church Council will work together to create an interim plan or to call an interim pastor to serve.

The good news is that we have time to celebrate Pastor Blair and Barb and their contribution to Hopeful's history! We have time as a congregation to create our profile, think about where we've been and where we are headed. We live in a growing and thriving community, with active membership and activities, and a lot to offer a new pastor!

We ask that you send up some prayers for Pastor Blair and Barb for a successful transition, new adventures, and opportunities for them. Prayers for our church leadership and continued partnership with the congregation. Prayers for our congregation, input into our profile, and next steps for Hopeful. We should pray for a future pastor; may we be blessed with a good pool of candidates. May God's will be done!

Sincerely,
Rachel Warren
Council President