

June 14, 2022

Messiah Members and Friends.

As you are likely aware, Pr. Burce's retirement date is quickly approaching. With this in mind I write on behalf of the Church Council with some updates on our preparations for this.

Last October we appointed a Transition Team to explore our needs and options going forward. The team recently presented its final report to Pr. Bridger and the Council. The report was based on over 200 responses to a congregational survey, and on feedback from multiple focus groups and one-on-one conversations. The Council received it with thanks and appreciation, and after thoughtful consideration, identified three major takeaways.

First: thanks be to God that Pr. Seth Bridger will continue in service to Messiah on August 1st and beyond. Messiah will be blessed by the continuity and stability that he is sure to provide.

Second, the Transition Team strongly recommends that Messiah will continue to be best served by two pastors, their relationship to be determined once the team is assembled. To this end the Council has authorized the immediate formation of a Call Committee. Its task will be to seek a new pastor with skills that complement those of Pr. Bridger and meet Messiah's pressing needs as identified through the feedback received to date and any yet to be gathered. I underscore that any decision to call a new pastor falls finally to the congregation as a whole. There is certain to be a gap, of course, between Pr. Burce's retirement and the arrival of a new pastor, if one is called. We have therefore begun the steps necessary to enlist the short-term help of an interim deacon or pastor.

Third, since effective growing ministry depends not only on pastors but on the strength and capacity of our entire administrative and operational team, the Council has asked our Administration and Finance Committee to appoint an Operations Subcommittee. This will be a time-limited group. Its specific task will be to work with our dedicated office staff to identify needs, review workloads, assess our current operational processes, and make recommendations on how to configure, support, and—if need be—augment our staff to meet the challenges the coming months and years are sure to bring.

These three items represent only the most time-sensitive recommendations of the Transition Team as adopted by the Council. More information will be provided in the weeks ahead. Meanwhile we thank the Transition Team for its dedication and hard work. Pray for us as we move forward. Messiah is blessed with an amazing staff in both Church and School. Our core membership is wonderfully faithful and committed. All are sure to serve us well in the days ahead.

In Christ,

Alan Parrott, President
Messiah Church Council