



## Dear FPC Family,

Our goal is to keep the FPC community current on the details and progress of our Pastoral Transition Plan through monthly email updates. This first email is intended to provide background on the transition process and activities thus far.

You have likely seen the messages requesting nominations for our Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and the 2022 Officer Nominating Committee (ONC). Thank you to all who have prayerfully submitted names for consideration. While these committees are being established, the Pastoral Transition Team, comprised of seven individuals representing both Session and Covenant Partners, is working to lay the foundation to streamline the process for the PNC and facilitate a timeline that completes the process by early 2023.

Below are details on the plan and current activities:

## The Search Will Look Different

For those who have been at First Pres for more than a few years, you may have witnessed prior pastor searches. Our transition to **ECO**, A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, in 2016 included a change in how we approach many things. The process of searching, screening, and selecting a new pastor is one of those changes.



While there are similarities in the process to call a new pastor, things that will look different this time include:

- ECO allows for the direct handoff (succession) of the next installed pastor without the requirement of an interim pastor. In our prior denomination, the search process could not begin until the current pastor resigned and an interim was installed, lengthening the process and creating an extended time of uncertainty.
- ECO allows for the consideration of internal candidates who follow the same process as an external candidate. This was previously not allowed.
- ECO allows a PNC established by the congregation to partner with Session.



## Recruiting Firm and Job Description

In preparation for the search, the Pastoral Transition Team has selected **The Dingman Company** to manage the recruiting process in partnership with the soon-to-be-formed Pastor Nominating Committee.

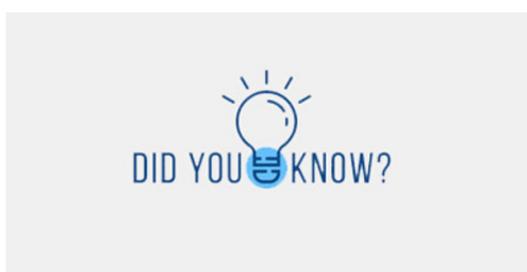
The Dingman Company was selected from several possible search firms, four of which formed the final shortlist. Representatives from each were interviewed, and all were clearly qualified and experienced professionals with long tenure in their field. The choice of Dingman was ultimately made because of their track record finding and placing Christian leaders into complex and challenging roles, including senior pastors, seminary presidents, and non-profit CEOs. The Pastoral Transition Team is looking forward to completing the opportunity description with Dingman and beginning the initial candidate search.

## Search Milestones

The Pastor Nominating Committee for this search will be approved at the next Annual Congregational Meeting, which is scheduled for Sunday, October 3. Once established, the PNC will work to complete the following tasks to help ensure the next senior pastor is installed by early 2023:



- Handoff from Pastoral Transition Team:
  - > Receive Opportunity Description
  - > Introduction to recruiting firm
- Define Evaluation Process
- Screen Candidates
- Conduct Interviews
- Finalize Short List
- Recommend final candidate



## Understanding Our Leadership

Did you know that in ECO churches, Called Pastors are not employees of the church they serve? They are actually called by the congregation and installed by the presbytery. Once installed, Called Pastors become employees of the denomination, voting members of the presbytery, and moderators and voting members of the Session. The

Senior Pastor participates in an annual review of goals and accomplishments with the Senior Clerks of Session.

We are fortunate that ECO has allowed Pastor Birchfield to structure his retirement in a manner that allows him to facilitate a seamless transition and we are grateful for Pastor Jim's willingness to continue to serve in this way. We will share more on this process and progress next month.

**Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
The Pastoral Transition Team**



Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

5300 Main Street  
Houston, TX | 77004 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

