

Dear Church Family,

This letter is to bring you up to date on actions Staff Administration is recommending as we live into this transition period following Kent Harrop's retirement. These actions all require church votes, so please note dates and times below.

- **Oct 28 at 7:30 pm EDT by Zoom:** Church Council Meeting to address solely these votes. All church members are invited, but only Church Council members may vote.
- **Nov 7 at 11:15 am EST In Person in Dove Room**, downstairs at FBC: All-Church Meeting for information and discussion
- **Nov 7 at 2:30 pm EST by Zoom:** All-Church Meeting for congregation members to vote on the matters outlined in this letter

We welcome discussion and hope for broad consensus on the important votes outlined in this letter.

A Sabbatical for Julie Flowers

At the request of Staff Administration, in early 2021, Julie Flowers presented her plan for a sabbatical to be taken January - March of 2022. Staff Ad unanimously approved this plan.

FBC personnel policies call for Ministers to take a sabbatical every seven years. This is considered a best practice for churches of all denominations. This will be Julie's first and only sabbatical at FBC, after more than 14 years as a minister here.

What is a sabbatical? Sabbaticals are a break from a typical work routine to allow time for in-depth study and reflection in pursuit of a purpose. At FBC, our sabbatical program recognizes that ministers do not have time to undertake in-depth of a field that will help them enrich what they bring to our congregation. Sabbaticals are not vacation time. At FBC, our sabbatical program is a time for our ministers to work differently, and for a brief period apart from the congregation, so that they can expand their horizons and bring new energy and ideas back to FBC.

During her Sabbatical, Julie will undertake an in-depth study of how to keep FBC on the cutting edge of creative Christian Education and Youth Ministry. She wrote in part in her proposal,

"I would like to spend part of my sabbatical time studying other churches with successful and creative and innovative Sunday School/Children's Ministries/Youth Ministry programs and to travel to see/experience what sorts of programs are happening that are working well. I would like to be able to meet with the ministers and staff members at churches where this innovation is happening and to learn from their experiences – both of what has worked and what has not.

In the end, I would envision my being able to create a presentation/learning experience for not only our Christian Education group but, also, for our Church Council and whole community (and perhaps, depending on how the scope grows, I could envision this evolving into a written form to be pitched for publication by the Alban Institute for use in other churches.)"

She will also work intentionally and in a more concentrated fashion with her pastoral counselor.

VOTE: Grant Julie Flowers a sabbatical from January 1 through March 31, 2022.

Creating a Search Committee

Following Kent's retirement, we are embarking on an interim period. FBC will hire an Interim Minister until a new full-time settled Minister can be hired. Staff Administration is tasked by the church By-Laws

to hire the interim. To that end, Staff Ad posted a job listing and is in contact with the denomination to get an interim in place as soon as possible.

To fill the settled Minister position, FBC's congregation must authorize the formation of a Search Committee which will identify and interview candidates and, ultimately, bring their first choice to the congregation for introductions and an all-congregation vote. Once authorized, the Search Committee will be formed and will embark on creating a job description and reviewing candidates.

VOTE: Authorize a Search Committee to identify a new minister candidate.

Reconfiguring Team Ministry

For 30 years, FBC's Ministerial Team has operated with equal responsibilities in a "Team Ministry". Rather than a typical Senior/associate minister(s) configuration, we have had two or three equal ministers, each of whom had "buck-stops-here" responsibility for areas of church life, such as Youth Fellowship, Spiritual Life, Music Committee, etc. The ministers also shared such things as worship planning, funerals/weddings/worship. One minister served as Team Coordinator, but that was primarily an administrative function that didn't factor in very heavily in the life of the team.

There were several reasons, goals, and hopes for this configuration:

- It would cut down on ministerial turnover: Ministers would be hired at different levels of experience, and as they gained expertise, they could stay in their role at FBC because they had Team Minister status rather than associate-minister status. Younger ministers leave when they itch to become senior pastors.
- Each minister would work directly for the congregation, rather than for the Senior Minister. The Staff Ad committee would serve in the role of that congregation.
- People would relate directly to the minister in charge of an area/committee/board--eliminating the tendency to bypass an Associate Minister to reach out to the Senior Minister, especially for someone who disagreed with the Associate's handling of an issue.

We learned several lessons:

- Team Ministry did not reduce ministerial turnover as seen over the past 30 years.
- Three highly experienced, full-time ministers resulted in a higher ministerial budget line. A Senior/Associate model is frankly less costly because there are demonstrably different levels of responsibility and, so, different salary levels.
- A non-hierarchical model is difficult when team ministers disagree; with no final arbiter, some disagreements don't get resolved. It was not feasible for Staff Ad to serve in that capacity.

Staff Administration unanimously recommends a change to the ministerial structure going forward. Although ministers will continue to have responsibility for very specific areas/committees/boards, the team will consist of a Senior and Associate Minister(s).

Staff Ad presents this recommendation after more than a year of conversation, thought and prayer. Staff Ad also wants to emphasize that the recommended Senior/Associate model is more flexible. Because we do not know what the new church landscape will be in the post-pandemic era, we may be

moving toward several part-time specialized ministers and lay people carrying out narrower functions; each at an associate's level and report to the Senior Minister for consistency in vision.

VOTE: That FBC adopts a Team Ministry structure that follows a Senior/Associate model.

Name Julie Flowers as Senior Minister

Julie's dedication to FBC is so very clear. Her accomplishments over the past 14 years have been consistent with the remarkably high level of ministerial achievement we find here at FBC. Staff Administration unanimously recommends that Julie be named Senior Minister. Therefore, the position to be filled by the Search Committee will be Full-Time Associate Minister.

VOTE: Name Julie Flowers Senior Minister of FBC Beverly.

Thank you for reading this long letter. The pandemic's gift may have been to allow us to embrace our annual theme "Stir me from Placidness," to feel freer to unlink from the past and think of new ways to be, even as moving into the unknown can be unsettling. But we know we go into the future with God at our side.

Blessings,

Gloria Stoneham, Moderator

Tracey Armstrong, Co-Chair

Pam Constantine, Co-Chair

Members of the Staff Administration Committee are:

Gloria Stoneham, Moderator

Lindsay Ducharme

Tracey Armstrong, Co-Chair

Jerry Karaganis

Pam Constantine, Co-Chair

Joshua Sykes