

Greetings from your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). We hope that 2020 is off to a good start for everyone. Advent season was a very busy time for all clergy as well as your PNC members. For the PNC, Advent was a time of hope and discernment. We wanted to make sure that certain candidates had the time and space to attend to their own congregations' needs without too much distraction of a potential new calling. With the Advent season behind us, we are back in communication with candidates and we felt the need to update you on the search.

There continues to be significant interest in the Idlewild Head of Staff position. While we get to know some candidates better through calls and visits, we continue to be introduced to new candidates. Our search is not like those that take place in the business world where resumes are collected, interviews conducted, and an offer made to the best available candidate out of the initial pool of candidates. Our search is continuous, without specific deadlines for us or candidates. We review and get to know candidates while continuously being open to new names, not knowing when the Spirit will present us the candidate who is called to Idlewild.

We understand there is a curiosity regarding our search and what kind of candidates we have prioritized. Will the new Head of Staff be:

- a man or woman?
- someone who already has experience as a Head of Staff?
- from a Southern church or another part of the country?
- a graduate of a DMin or PhD program?
- young or old?
- married or single?

While those are natural curiosities about who will ultimately lead the church, in order to discern the best call to Idlewild we have focused our efforts more on analyzing other personal characteristics, such as:

- **Connects with people** – This probably seems like an obvious characteristic, but it doesn't always present itself right away. Some candidates delivered terrific sermons and spoke with purpose and dedication in phone interviews, but we didn't feel a connection once we got to know him or her better. With others, there may not have been an immediate connection, but one grew as we got to know them in different environments. In order to get a better feel for how a candidate might connect with Idlewild's congregation, staff and the greater community, we have to move beyond watching sermons. Phone calls, dinners with candidates and their family, small group meetings, and one-on-one interviews have all been useful tools for us to determine how well a candidate connects with us, with other ministers, and with their congregations.
- **Leadership ability** – We can sometimes use past experience and references as a guide, but leadership can take many forms. There is no bright line test to determine if a person has the right leadership qualities for Idlewild. Part of leadership is being able to connect with people, but it also includes being able to address difficult topics and situations, providing guidance and support to staff, developing other clergy who serve Idlewild, and inspiring congregants to serve the church in different ways.
- **Enthusiasm** – Being the Head of Staff is a challenging job and requires enthusiasm during both times of joy and times of trial. Most pastors who we've met have enthusiasm for their preaching and teaching. Those are areas where most members of the Idlewild community see them in action. But a successful Head of Staff should be enthusiastic about other aspects of the job including stewardship, administration, and community involvement.

- **Discerning a call** – More than any other quality, we seek a Head of Staff who discerns a call to Idlewild. All of us have learned much about the holy discipline of spiritual discernment during our search. We have experienced and grown in our own collective discernment, and we have also witnessed the personal discernment of the ministers with whom we have spoken. Even if a candidate minister possesses each of the attributes listed above, if he or she does not discern the Lord’s call to Idlewild or if the PNC does not discern that the Lord is calling that candidate minister to Idlewild, we move forward in our search praising God.

We want to make sure we find the right candidate for Idlewild and are working to ensure we find the person who senses a call to our church and has the attributes that will strengthen and guide the church in the future.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact any of us by phone, email or in person.

***Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit serving the Lord. Romans 12:11***

Betty Louis Sheppard – Chair  
Jeanne Marie Cummings  
Albert Johnson  
Julie Markham  
Cindy Moore  
Mitchell Redd  
Jeremy Sykes  
Jeff Thompson