

## Transition Team Update

Temple Talk - Sunday, December 1, 2024

Julie Maes, Council Vice President

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Pastor Paul's retirement announcement put into motion activities to understand what we want for Immanuel in the future and the gifts and talents we believe we need in a Sr Pastor to help guide us along that path. Most people are not big fans of change and this is definitely a significant change for Immanuel. In times of change, listening, communication, and, yes, grace, are very important. I am here today to provide a promised update about how this process is going.

Proverbs 18:15 as stated in the Message says "Wise men and women are always learning, always listening for fresh insights." We have taken several steps to listen and learn - to understand this congregation's hopes for Immanuel, the potential priorities for a senior pastor, and your fears and concerns about the transition we are going through. We have held in-person listening sessions with the congregation. We have met with staff to gain their insights in these areas. We have provided multiple tools for members to provide input including an online survey, hard copy forms sent home to Sunday School and Confirmation parents, and posted flipcharts for Sunday School parent input as well. We are also gathering input from Confirmation students as part of their Advent discussions. Gathering input from the different demographic groups within the congregation is important to ensure we understand our needs and hopes for the future.

Council also met with a representative of the Minneapolis area Synod to discuss our transition. One recommendation he had was that we reach out to community leaders to gain an understanding of how our community is changing so we can think about how that impacts our service to our community. We are meeting with community leaders in the next couple of weeks.

We have assembled a Transition Team with representatives from across our congregation. One of their first activities is to use the congregation and community input to develop a Ministry Site Profile (otherwise known as a MSP). This is used to communicate our ministry needs to potential internal, external, or interim pastor candidates. Before we finalize the MSP, we will be reaching back out to you to help confirm that we have heard your hopes and priorities accurately. Our current plan is to have a MSP available in mid-January so there is time to review it before the Annual Congregation meeting at the end of January. Along with developing the MSP, the transition team will also focus on communication with you as we continue through the transition process.

I have a few requests of you today. First, be patient. I know it may seem like the process is moving slowly but we want to ensure we are truly hearing from you and the community and not making incorrect assumptions. Second, to all of you that have provided input, thank you. If you haven't yet provided input, please consider making use of the online survey or other methods mentioned so that you can be heard. Third, reach out if you have questions. You can contact me, Council members, or staff if you have questions and we will do our best to provide you with answers, even if the answer is that we are still working on it. We will also post the names of the Transition Team on the Pastor Transition website so you can talk with one of them.

Finally, we ask for your continued prayers as we work to discern our congregation's path forward and how a senior pastor can help guide us along that path. Pastor Paul has been that leader for a long time and leaves very large shoes to fill. Again, changes like this can be uncomfortable but I think Pastor Paul would tell you it also provides us with opportunities to consider how we can evolve and grow as a church. Your input, support, and prayers will help us do this in a positive, grace-filled manner. So, it

seemed fitting to run across a bookmark provided to one of my daughters during confirmation with these verses. From Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts." And from Jeremiah 29:11 "I know the plans I have for you, declares that Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." The work we do now as a congregation will help us hope and plan for our future. Thank you again for your input and prayers.