

Pastor Search Team
SAVE THE DATE ANNOUNCEMENT
June 2-June 5

From Kirk Lewis, Chair, PST

The Pastor Search Team of South Main Baptist Church, in unanimous agreement and excited beyond measure, has extended an invitation to a pastor candidate to come to our church in view of a call to become our next Senior Pastor. That invitation has been enthusiastically accepted.

In his written acceptance of our invitation he said, "I've discovered that five key practices of a healthy church involve worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and mission-filled living. Throughout this journey of learning more about South Main Baptist Church, I am convinced that these practices and the desire to grow in them are some of the elements that make this church so special." He recognizes and loves the heart of this church.

He and his family will be here to meet you at a series of meetings June 2-4. Then, he will preach in both services on June 5. As per our by-laws, those in attendance that day will be allowed to vote by ballot whether or not to extend the official call to our chosen candidate to serve as our pastor.

One of the passages of scripture that we as a committee claimed over the past 10 months was that familiar verse from Jeremiah 29. *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future..."*

God knows what we need and when we need it. Always. In our case, he knew exactly who we needed as Senior Pastor and when our paths needed to cross. God's plans for our church give us hope and a future. His timing is always perfect.

The Candidate's Background

Because of the need to maintain confidentiality at this time, we cannot share the name of our candidate with you. Here is a glimpse of the one we believe God has chosen to serve with us in the years to come. Our chosen candidate is 38 years old. He grew up in South Carolina in a Baptist home and lived across the street from his grandfather who was a Baptist preacher. He has a wonderful testimony of his grandfather's influence in his life. He likes to say, "I am Baptist born, Baptist bred, and when I dies, I'll be Baptist dead."

Early in his ministry, he served four years as an associate pastor and worship pastor at churches in Kentucky. For the past 12 years he has served as a senior pastor for two churches in Texas. He earned his master's degree from Truett Seminary at Baylor and is currently working on his doctorate also at Truett Seminary. He should complete that work this December.

He and his wife have three children. His wife is a delightful partner in ministry and reminds us a great deal of Brenda. Like Brenda, she has a heart for special needs children.

We will share his name and a more complete biographical background on Sunday, May 29, the week of his arrival in view of a call.

The Match

Beginning in February 2021, our congregation worked with the Center for Healthy Churches to develop a Congregational Profile that spoke to our history, who we believe we are now and who we wanted to be as God's people in the years to come. We also collectively developed a Pastor Profile that identified our ministry priorities, sermon characteristics, personal traits we desired in our next pastor and our non-negotiables. That profile gave us a three-dimensional sketch of the spirit, skills and attributes you wanted to see in our next pastor.

The PST used that document and the biblical description of a pastor as identified in I Timothy and Titus as a scorecard or checklist against which every potential candidate was measured. Through a series of deep conversations, hours spent together in dialogue and collectively listening to more than 75 of his sermons, we believe our candidate checks off every box. We encourage you to review that Pastor Profile in the days ahead. As you meet him and hear him speak, we think you will see how well he fits that profile.

One of the references we called knows Dr. Lyles well. He knows our church and has preached here in the past. His comment to us was that our profile seemed to be written with our candidate in mind. Every reference we contacted simply reaffirmed our choice.

Personal Feelings

On a personal level, I can't wait for you to meet him and for him to meet you. As we visited, the conversation was natural and unforced. It doesn't matter how young or old you are, he finds a way to connect with people and build relationships. He listens well. He's thoughtful, with an easy-going, relaxed and informal personality. He laughs easily. He is a man of humility. It's never about him. It's always about Jesus and the church.

He clearly believes building relationships is the starting point for evangelism, outreach, discipleship, missions and service. At one point, he said, "If you cultivate a place where people feel like they belong, they will believe in Jesus."

I found his sermons biblical and steeped in Baptist doctrine. His messages are deep, challenging and heartfelt. His vision for missions and service mirrored our own. He loves the idea of reaching out to our diverse community. He believes strongly in teaching and discipling others and encouraging each of us to live and breathe Jesus every day.

I believe the Ministry Leadership Team will thrive under his leadership. He has a way of bringing out the best in people.

When I served on that pastor search team 40 years ago and met Ron for the first time, it was as if God was saying, "Pay attention. This is the guy." I felt the same thing during our first conversation with our candidate. The more we talked the harder it was to contain our excitement. We have prayed from the beginning of our search for discernment and clarity. God's choice could not have been clearer to me. I think you'll hear that same thought from each member of the Pastor Search Team.

I'm excited about what God has done so far and what the future holds. I find myself most excited for our young adults...our college kids...our youth... who I think will find our pastor candidate eager to engage, eager to disciple them and eager to build relationships with them.

Robin and I valued our relationship to Ron and Brenda as we all grew old together and as we all grew together in our faith. I'm excited that our younger couples and younger members will have that same opportunity with this family.

The Call Weekend

Watch for the detailed schedule of activities for the Call Weekend, June 2-5. There will be events for every age group to meet our pastor candidate and his family. Just know if you cannot attend the meeting scheduled for your group, come any time. You'll want to meet this family and they definitely want to meet you.

Thanks For Your Prayers

I know you have a thousand questions. We will do our best to provide the answers we can provide. We'll certainly do our best to share the reasons why we feel we've found God's choice. We want to love him and let him love us as we work together in this place...It's the South Main way.

Thank you for your constant encouragement and your endless prayers. We felt them every time we met. Please don't stop praying now.

Pray for the continued readiness of our hearts to embrace someone new.

Pray for our candidate and his family even though you don't yet know their names. He and his wife are enthusiastic about the possibilities of coming to Pasadena.

Pray for their current church who may be facing the same pastor transition we have faced in the days to come.

Pray for the week when he comes in view of a call. Pray that when the week is over and the last sermon preached, that you will feel the same clarity and the same sense of peace about this call that we feel.

South Main Pastor Search Team

Nolan Allen, Victoria Anton, Stephanie Bailey, Tara Battle, Sherry Green, Kirk Lewis, Charley Padgett, Corbett Post