**MCLEAN PRESBYTERIAN**

## McLean Presbyterian Church (MPC) Pastoral Search Committee (PSC)

# How We Evaluate Candidates

Suggestions for Senior Pastor candidates have been received from the congregation through our survey, email and listening sessions, from committee members, and from leaders in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Generally, each candidate suggested is contacted to determine if he has interest in being considered for the position and asked to submit information, including a resume and the PCA's Ministerial Data Form (MDF). Once an applicant indicates interest and submits his information, he is assigned a two-person team to conduct a preliminary evaluation and scheduled for an initial conversation with a small subset of PSC members.

**Preliminary Evaluation**
A two-person PSC team listens to a minimum of six sermons *(see sermon evaluation overview below)*, reviews application information, and reviews social media if available. This step generally includes a look at the applicant's church website to determine church and leadership size.

**Initial Conversation**
A subset of the PSC meets virtually with the applicant for a 45-minute, high level conversation as a "get to know you" time.

**General Review**
All members of the PSC listen to at least one sermon and review application materials.

The PSC convenes to hear reports of the above engagements and votes whether to continue the interview process or decline further consideration. Applicants who continue in the selection process are scheduled for a 90-minute interview with the full PSC, with a focus on questions derived from the [Senior Pastor Profile](#) *(see pages 17 and 18)*. As appropriate, additional interviews are scheduled to include the applicant's family members. Prior to the second full-PSC interview, the candidate is asked to share thoughts on worship service style to provide the PSC with information regarding his background and preferences for the various components of a worship service *(see below for more information)* to see how he fits with MPC's worship style.

The PSC expects to visit the current church of Senior Pastor finalists as well as host the finalists and family in McLean before making a recommendation to the congregation.

**Sermon Evaluation**
From our Pastor Profile, we are seeking "preaching that is Christ-centered, grace-filled, well-crafted, well-delivered, and engaging. Preaching should normally be expository, letting God speak to his people

from his word. Preaching should cover the whole counsel of God and apply biblical truth to life, leading to deeper obedience and faithfulness." The PSC found this article from the Gospel Coalition very helpful in establishing a common framework for listening to and evaluating sermons.

The PSC reviews sermons looking at five aspects:

- **Contextual** – The sermon should exposit a biblical text and should be consistent with the immediate context of that text. The sermon should fit with the original message the author had for the original audience. The text should inform the sermon the pastor delivers.

- **Convictional** – The sermon should express declarations of truth about who God is, what God has done, and what that means for us. Hard or difficult truths should not be ignored or minimized but should be exposited with love and compassion. Sermons should challenge and confront cultural narratives and their idolatries.

- **Clear** – Sermons should have a good introduction, a clear structure, and teaching points that are easy to follow. Illustrations should be clear, relevant, and helpful. Sermons should be well-delivered and engaging.

- **Compassionate** – Sermons should be delivered from a posture of love and compassion for the congregation and for lost souls. The pastor's love for Christ should be obvious and compelling.

- **Christ-Centered** – Christ's redemptive work on our behalf should be at the heart of every sermon. Sermons should relate more to what Christ has done for us than what is required of us. Sermons should preach Christ to our hearts in ways that are affectionate, wondrous, memorable, and practical.

**Worship Service Style**
The PSC recognizes that the PCA features a wide spectrum of styles and cultures surrounding church services. The categories below help us understand MPC's unique characteristics as well as the preferences and backgrounds of our applicants, and provide a way to communicate with applicants on this topic.

I. **Music, Choir, and Accompaniment** – Considers the style of music, the role of instruments, the role of the Psalms, etc.

II. **Liturgical Structure** – Considers the extent to which the liturgy is structured and consistent versus free and open.

III. **Elements of Public Worship** – Considers the extent to which scripture reading, preaching, creeds, catechisms, responsive readings, etc. are present in a service.

IV. **Administration of the Sacraments** – Considers frequency with which the Lord's supper and baptism are observed.

V. **Church Calendar** – Considers questions surrounding the structure of the church calendar, including liturgical holidays and responsiveness to the "cultural calendar" in terms of the school year, vacation seasons, national holidays, etc.

VI. **Sermon/Service Length** – Considers the typical lengths of the service and sermon.

VII. **Role of Women in Worship** – Considers which aspects of a worship service are open to being conducted by women, such as reading scripture or leading the congregational prayer.

VIII. ***Covenant Theology Application*** – Considers the extent to which the church embraces separate generational or affinity worship services or activities (e.g. youth group, MOPS, senior saints, etc.) versus intergenerational worship that is supplemented with generational/affinity education.

IX. ***Pastoral Dress Code*** – Considers expectations surrounding pastoral dress code, from jeans to robes.

X. ***Use of Technology (Screens; Livestream)*** - *pre-COVID* – Considers the balance of visual elements (e.g. lights, screens, livestream) and auditory/listening elements (e.g. responsive readings).