

PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATES

Date: August 2009

The Pastoral Search Committee continues to work at sifting through some 22 profiles of pastoral candidates from ABC in Valley Forge as well as several that have come to us from outside sources. This is only the first group of potential pastors and the process is lengthy. We have been meeting on a weekly basis and as we prayerfully consider each prospect, we ask for your continued prayer support. The task before us is most important as we define the direction for the future ministry of Hamilton First Baptist Church.

The Pastoral Search Committee has met several times to begin the process of finding our next minister. Committee members are Linda Cazer, Jean Chapin, Dick Cheshire, John Morris, Dan Saulsgiver, Rob Schutt, Marilyn Upton, and Ephraim Woods.

Date: June 2009

On Thursday, June 4 we met with Don Rasmussen, the Interim Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches of New York State. During our meeting, Don explained how churches and prospective pastors learn about each other. Each American Baptist minister seeking a new pastorate fills out a profile on experience, education, strengths, weaknesses, and interests. Don explained how to read the variety of data in a typical profile and answered our questions about process, finances, and candidates in general. He is very willing to meet with our committee as needed and with the church itself if desired. While we greatly appreciate Don's expertise and the A.B.C. process, we are not required to follow strict procedures. As a self-governing congregation, we will modify the process as needed to meet our own needs.

We are currently reviewing the data and comments from the church-wide survey that concluded on June 14. We will use that survey to update our church profile, a report that summarizes our history, traditions, demographics, governing boards, and congregation for prospective pastors. The committee will send our profile, along with other church reports, to whoever expresses interest in the position. We will then evaluate candidates in a variety of ways, including interviews by phone, listening to recordings of their Sunday morning services, contacting their references, and visiting them either in their own church or at another location. Even though many churches need new ministers, we are encouraged that a significant number of pastors are seeking new positions. Some candidates have extensive experience while others are just starting their ministry. We realize, however, that there is no reliable way to predict how long this process will take. It could be a matter of a few months, a year, or longer. All of us, of course, hope to find a gifted minister soon and recommend him or her to our congregation. But finding the right person may take some time, so we ask for your prayers and patience. We will keep you posted.