

## THE PASTORAL TRANSITION – AN INTRODUCTION – FEBRUARY 2024

It seems fitting that this year the Epiphany season at Rye Presbyterian Church, marking the beginning of our liturgical year, ushers in the coming of a new chapter within our own institutional legacy. As we embark upon this new chapter, we couldn't be more grateful for God's gracious gifts—for His loving kindnesses—including our steadfast congregation and our ability to work together and to lean on each other, as we faithfully and earnestly embrace each new season ahead.

We have begun our Pastoral Transition process with the engagement of Michelle Snyder—a renowned and incredibly experienced consultant and coach from the Center for Healthy Churches. Michelle has been working with our Co-Pastors since the genesis of this transition (and long before!). She has been a partner to our church throughout the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) process and is working directly with us—the Pastoral Transition Team. In the text ahead, we'll share more about our team, a summary from the CAT, and a snapshot of our immediate next steps in the pastoral transition process.

***Please take note that should you have any questions throughout any part of this process, including right now, you can reach us directly by emailing: [transitionteam@ryepc.com](mailto:transitionteam@ryepc.com).***

### **What is, and Who Are, the Pastoral Transition Team?**

We are members of the congregation who have been hand-selected by our Co-Pastors and approved by our Session, to help create the framework for the months ahead—as we diligently prepare for John's retirement and as we ensure we are supportive and prepared throughout Dan's treatment process.

Among us, we have decades of professional experience in consulting, executive leadership, board relations, medicine, academia, and—ultimately—*leading through change*. Spiritually, we represent all aspects of our congregation. We are all ordained, current or past, members of Session.

**It is our job to lay the foundation** for each of our next steps **and to think ahead**. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Communication with the congregation;
- Data aggregation and analysis (to support process-mapping);
- Staff interviews (to help inform our processes);
- Role description writing (with pastoral input and based on needs assessments);
- And, soon, support of the Pastoral Nominating Committee.

We are *not* charged with selecting our new Pastor. The pastoral selection will be the work of the **Pastor Nominating Committee**, soon to be elected by *you*, the congregation. It *is* our role in this process, to ensure that the framework is in place for each step to run smoothly and to operate transparently.

[Click here to meet the members of the Transition Team.](#)

### **The CAT: What Type of “Data” Do We Have So Far?**

The CAT assessment, completed by over 200 people, yielded a large amount of data that Michelle helped RPC leadership understand holistically, and highlighted many important characteristics of our membership—importantly, ideas on the direction of the church and opinions on what the next pastor could be. We thank each of you for your diligence and candor in completing the CAT. It is enormously helpful to the Transition team in focusing on our work. So, what did the CAT teach us? A great deal about our congregation, including:

We have a far-reaching and an open-minded theological perspective.

We embrace change—both within our congregation and our community;

We care deeply for this institution and the mission we uphold.

In spite of great parishioner satisfaction, we desire to grow more connected to each other and the broader community;

Some of the qualities that matter most to us in the selection of a new pastor include:

**The ability to preach:** by inspiring and connecting us to God’s word;

**Strategic management:** by guiding us into the future;

**Pastoral care:** by engaging us empathetically and directly in our times of need.

In the coming weeks, we’ll share additional relevant details and outputs from the CAT.

### **What Comes Next?**

We will have a number of meetings and opportunities for discussion in the months ahead. Below please find a snapshot of those that are immediately forthcoming.

#### **Immediate Congregational Connections**

**February 4:** The first of three Congregational Conversations - Our official kick-off of the transition where our consultant, Michelle Snyder, will give people a sense for where we're headed in the transition process. In addition, there will be a chance to talk about the history and “DNA” of the church, as well as to speak to the CAT results recently presented to the church officers.

#### **Next 30-days—Transition Team Timeline (for transparency)**

February 2: Onsite interview meetings with RPC Staff

February 3: Transition Team strategic planning meeting