



March 20, 2020

Dear Valley members and friends,

As most of you are aware, over a year ago, Pastor Jay informed Valley that he was preparing to retire as Senior Pastor and begin a new phase of ministry. In response, Valley began a process to identify a candidate for our next Senior Pastor.

Our Senior Pastor Search Committee spent the past year working with Agora Search Group, a pastoral search firm, reviewing and interviewing qualified candidates for the position. The Committee recently recommended a final candidate and the Elder Board spent a weekend interviewing that candidate as he visited Valley.

Now, it is with great anticipation and joy that the Senior Pastor Search Committee and the Elder Board, with Pastor Jay's full support, unanimously recommend Rev. Robert (Rob) O'Neal as the next Senior Pastor of Valley Community Baptist Church.

Rev. O'Neal currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Resonate Community Church in Shakopee, MN, a church plant of Wooddale Church. He also currently serves as the Director of Church Multiplication within the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference. More detailed information about Rev. O'Neal may be found on Valley's website here: <http://avon.valleycommunity.cc/transition>.

In accord with our church constitution, the Elders are calling for a congregational meeting on Sunday, April 5, 2020 to present and affirm by a vote of Valley members, Rev. Rob O'Neal as the next Senior Pastor as well as the financial package being offered.

As you are aware, physically meeting together in these days is difficult and restricted both by the CDC and the State of Connecticut. Despite these challenges, the Elder Board and Pastoral Search Committee would like to press forward with the candidating process. This raises two reasonable questions for most of us:

(1) **Why are we pressing forward during this time?**

First, we have a strong candidate and clearly feel God leading us to bring the congregation into the process now. Second, while the Elders are mindful of the challenging circumstances, they are also aware that God is still moving within our church and ministry. The leadership prefers not to allow hurdles to slow ministry progress, but instead to press into the challenges. We know this will mean adopting some new ways of interacting with Rev. O'Neal, discussing his candidacy, and then voting together as a church family.

(2) What might it look like to have Rev. O’Neal here for a Candidate Weekend given the current restrictions against physically meeting together?

Valley leadership is reviewing technological options for meeting together. Many of us (as workers or families) are using technologies to stay connected with others, study for school and to work from home. This includes tools such as video meetings, conference calls, and live streaming. The Ministry Staff, Elder Board and the Pastoral Search Committee are currently considering how we might use various technologies to meet and interact with Rev. O’Neal, and eventually conduct a congregational meeting. Over the next two weeks, we will share those final plans in detail with you.

As you review the material in the candidate profile, please understand that the meeting times and schedule were prepared before the COVID-19 situation. The leadership is reviewing the Candidate Weekend schedule to ensure these times are still the best times for interacting with Rev. O’Neal. We currently hope to conduct a congregational meeting (virtually or physically) at 4 p.m. on Sunday, April 5 when members will have an opportunity to vote.

In the midst of crisis and challenge, the Church has often responded by “leaning into” those challenges, only to find that God was opening new doors for ministry. May we “lean into” these challenges with the same hopeful determination.

In the service of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Elder Board

Dr. Thomas Turbiak (Chair)
Rev. Jay Abramson
Mr. Caleb Earnest
Rev. Kevin Haskins
Mr. Warren Humphrey
Mr. Mark Marlowe
Mr. Jez McIntosh
Mr. Adam Sobek
Mr. Steve Tate
Dr. David Wittmer

Senior Pastoral Search Committee

Dr. Sam Moy (co-Chair)
Mrs. Charlotte Hacker (co-Chair)
Mr. Caleb Earnest (Elder Representative)
Mrs. Katie Greenlaw
Mr. Bill Lindberg
Mrs. Mary Marlowe
Mr. Kip Mentzer
Mrs. Nancy Parent