



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

January 19, 2011

I am writing this letter in an effort to shed light on the progress made by the Pulpit Committee over the past few months. We value your prayers and know that waiting is a very difficult task – indeed, waiting *without information* is nearly impossible. *Thank you for your patience* throughout this challenging process of determining the Lord's servant for His church.

What have we been up to? After our beginning in August, the next three months were all about the arduous process of creating a document that would give applicants an honest and accurate reflection of our church and community. We gathered information and, along with input from the Session, sought to understand more clearly our identity as a church. The document we created became known as the *Oak Hills Presbyterian Church Profile*, and includes our vision and mission, ministries, identity, community, financial outlook and pastoral job descriptions. We encourage you to read it on the church website.

In mid-November we took a significant step as we moved from development and strategy to actively pursuing and discussing applicants. One of our challenges has been developing a standard means of evaluating applicants that is both fair and discerning. As you might imagine, nine different people have nine different ideas about what the next pastor might look like. Although the elders have given the team a specific job description and insight into what qualities we are to be seeking, it remains a difficult task requiring wisdom, discernment, humility, kindness, patience, and much grace. I am pleased, perhaps more than anyone, that the committee has been actively pursuing godliness, sincerity and grace through the process.

Pulpit Committee

Krista Boan
Michael Buckley
Bill Burns
Rachel Collins
Wanda Corley
Chuck Johnson
Curt Mauk
John Miller
Rick Pierce

To date, we have received approximately 46 applications for the Senior Pastor position. The team is meeting about every 1-2 weeks and is diligently listening to sermons and reading resumes, ministry philosophies, and interview questionnaires. Although we do not have a name to announce at this time, we have whittled this long list down to a small handful of possible candidates. Over the next few weeks, we will be scheduling phone interviews with these applicants and calling on their references. Should one or more of these few men continue to meet the qualifications we are seeking, we would then pursue having them come to interview in person.

The more I am immersed in the process of evaluating and understanding our church, the more I am convinced that this season was not only necessary for our maturity and growth, but is intended to be a very exciting season to anticipate what the Lord is doing in our midst. Although we are without a Senior Pastor, we are not without leadership. Pastor Jon has continued to display his heart for us, and has heroically provided necessary senior leadership. Perhaps even more exciting is how the Lord has supplied a team of elders and deacons who are passionate about His church and His people.

"What can I do?" Glad you asked! First, I want to ask that you **actively encourage** the members of the Pulpit Committee. They have been devoting many hours every week for several months into this process and are working as fast as they possibly can. Next, I want to ask for your **continued patience and grace**. As much as we all would like to be meeting our next Senior Pastor as soon as possible, the Pulpit Team and Elders are committed to faithfully completing the process to find the Lord's choice. Lastly, my most important request, and even exhortation, is for you to **fervently seek the Lord in prayer and fasting** for His clear vision. We are creatures in need of our Creator! We will be sharing more thoughts with you in the near future regarding specific ways you can be praying.

If you have any questions or concerns, *please* contact myself or another member of the Pulpit Committee. You can reach me at (913) 254-9337 or rick@marriagevine.com.

In His Grip,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Pierce". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Rick Pierce

Pulpit Committee Chairman