



## THE TABLE

*We welcome everyone  
to ours*

## WHAT WE SEEK IN A PASTOR

Churches seeking a new pastor sometimes fall into an understandable trap. If the previous pastor was well-liked, the trap is called “Another one of those,” and that idea dominates the ensuing Pastor Nominating Committee’s thinking. If the previous experience was not so good, the trap is “Let’s avoid that,” and the PNC screens candidates on that premise, no matter how ill-defined “that” may be.

This committee believes Stone Church would be foolish not to have learned from its past. There is much history in this report that helps explain how we’ve come to be who we are. But if we are truly to be a reformed church, called to change as we learn and learn as we change, we cannot be bound by our past, though we must own it.

*I will give you shepherds after  
my own heart, who will feed you  
with knowledge and  
understanding.*

Jeremiah 3:15 (NRSVUE)

Our Mission Statement on **Page 3** is about what we strive to be, our Vision Statement is aspirational, and our Core Values embody goals we are yet to achieve. We wrote them after listening to our members’ hopes for what they want Stone Church to be.

The next pastor we call will be someone who also has learned from the past and is attracted to us because what we've said in this report represents a possible match on a path to mutual growth and fulfillment of what we believe God calls us to be. Such a pastor won't be perfect, but will be perfect for us; not stuck in mud but planted firmly in love, learning and life.

We strongly value someone who will deliver intellectually challenging and spiritually engaging sermons that meaningfully apply ancient scripture to 21<sup>st</sup> Century people, some of whom came from the 20<sup>th</sup> and others will enter the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Sunday mornings are very important to us, and we appreciate creativity in worship styles that simultaneously fit the needs of the moment while preserving the best of the past.

Jesus served the marginalized and — though few of us fit that description — we believe we are called to do the same. So, our pastor will be comfortable advocating for justice, equity, and inclusion, as have our most recent three pastors. We have LGBTQ+ members, and if we are a successful church, we will have more.

| <b>“Very high” ranking of priorities for a new pastor*</b> |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Preaching inspiring sermons                             | 70%   |
| 2. Planning and leading inspiring worship                  | 46%   |
| 3. Visiting sick, shut-in and bereaved                     | 31%   |
| 4. Involve laity in worship and planning                   | 27.4% |
| 5. Emphasize spiritual development of members              | 27.1% |
| <b>“Essential” ranking of qualities for a new pastor*</b>  |       |
| 1. Believes in God   | 78%   |
| 2. Effective preacher/leader                               | 76%   |
| 3. Believes in Jesus as son of God                         | 65%   |
| 4. Good leader   | 62%   |
| 5. Accepting of people with divergent views                | 49%   |
| <i>Source: 2024 congregational survey</i>                  |       |

We don't want to abandon tradition because it's old; we will abandon tradition when it keeps us from being effective in ministry, especially with younger people, and following Jesus' example. Our next pastor should be comfortable with that and not afraid to open our eyes, hearts, and minds to needed change. There is untapped leadership potential throughout our congregation to be cultivated and with which to collaborate.

The next pastor should lead us to be more humane as we attempt to follow the Spirit. That means — as Jesus modeled — relating to people regardless of their position or condition with compassion, care and love. And that pastor should expect us to do the same.