

What's Expected of Westtown Members who will be elected by our Congregation to serve on our Pastor Search Committee (PSC)?

In the next couple of months, Westtown Church will be asking for our Congregation to form a Pastor Search Committee to identify the man who we will eventually call to be our next Senior Pastor. The Session has engaged the services of McGowan Global Institute (MGI, Nashville, TN) to partner with us on this journey. They are also assisting us in identifying candidates for our Interim Senior Pastor.

A Senior Pastor must be "called" by the Congregation and then approved by our Presbytery as well.

A PSC is typically comprised of nine members, elected by the Congregation. Since MGI has extensive experience in collaborating with over 200 PSC's, we have asked them to provide information to set expectations for those Westtown members who commit to serve on this important committee.

The following is paraphrased from MGI's materials.

The Pastor Search Committee (PSC) will be entrusted with the most important matter that is before Westtown Church at that particular time in our history...finding God's choice to be our next senior pastor. The result of their work will be long lasting and have profound implications, either positive or negative, for the future of Westtown and her ministry. It is for this reason that those elected should make their participation as a PSC member a very high priority until the work of the PSC is completed. If one's church obligations are already very heavy, it would be wise to consider a request to be relieved of some of those obligations until the work of the PSC is concluded. The fact that the congregation has elected them should prompt them to make every effort to faithfully fulfill the obligation of serving on the PSC as their highest priority as relates to their involvement in the church.

Typically, the task of a PSC will take 12 - 18 months to complete. Of course, under certain circumstances it may not take that long. Under other circumstances, it will take longer. If the PSC is committed to diligently engage the task and complete it with all deliberate speed, there will be weekly meetings that ordinarily last 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Of course, there will be periods when the PSC will go two or three weeks without meeting at all. Generally, during those periods, sub-groups or teams will be at work on projects assigned to them by the Chairman. Then, of course, the PSC may agree to "take a break" during certain holiday seasons, such as Christmas, when there are many social events taking place and lots of other distractions.

The search process developed by McGowan requires very little travel by the PSC. Typically, a small team from the PSC would travel to visit only two candidates during the process. This team will travel to his church location to hear him preach. Technology makes it possible to more easily evaluate a candidate, but also to have personal visits by means of telephone and video conferencing.

While it may appear that serving on the PSC is a heavy and daunting responsibility, the rewards of serving are great! God blesses those serving with a deep sense that one is making a very significant contribution to the life, work, and future of their church. Beyond that, the personal spiritual growth that occurs while serving is significant for one's development as a Christian. Finally, the quality of Christian fellowship among those on the PSC is rarely experienced in the life of a local church. The discipline of listening, of praying, of walking and working shoulder to shoulder over an extended period of time produces rich spiritual rewards. The necessity of carrying a heavy load together contributes to a deep bonding that almost always occurs between members during the search. Members of a PSC often

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feel sadness as the team concludes their task and sometimes will agree to meet periodically just to continue their fellowship. In short, it is a high and blessed calling to serve one's local church as a member of the PSC.

We hope that everyone, who calls Westtown home, will be regularly praying throughout this process and supportive of the nine or so members who will make up our future PSC and for God's will in finding the ideal Senior Pastor for Westtown Church.