

Discussion Document

Proposed Selection Criteria and Considerations in Selecting a New Senior Minister for First Baptist Church Edmonton

This document is intended to assist First Baptist Church Edmonton's members, Council and Senior Minister Search Committee in understanding what expectations, skills and abilities are likely to be particularly important to the Church's and the Senior Minister's success over the next few years. This is not a job description and it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of requirement. It is, however, intended to assist all at FBC Edmonton to think about what needs, hopes and expectations we have so that these become a transparent part of the search process.

There are many different Ministers with many different skills sets. There are many different Church congregations with very different realities and needs. Even excellent Ministers can be wrong for certain congregations at certain points in their histories. Even excellent congregations can be very wrong for certain Ministers at certain points in their histories. The objective is to have a shared understanding of the situation and needs of First Baptist Church Edmonton now and in the foreseeable future, to identify the skills sets, abilities and approaches that would be required in a Senior Minister in order for that person to be successful, and then to find a reasonable number of candidates that would allow the selection of one that fits best.

Listed below, in no particular order of precedence, are the parameters, needs and contexts that the proposed Chair of the Search Committee suggests form the basis of the search process. Again, these are proposed for discussion, but any final set of defining principles should clearly stated and be agreed to by the Council and Congregation as a starting point in the search and should then be used to guide that process through to its conclusion. After that, they should form core elements of the performance expectations of the Senior Minister.

Context

1. The future trajectory of First Baptist Church Edmonton will be affected significantly, and for a considerable period of time, by the choices that the Congregation makes in selecting its next Senior Minister. Taking the time to get this right is more important than doing this quickly.

2. First Baptist Church Edmonton is a unique and important congregation that has both the ability and the responsibility to maintain a strong, vibrant and purpose-driven ministry. It is what is known as a “Destination Church”. Beyond being important to its members and adherents, First Baptist Edmonton serves as a beacon to many others across Western Canada and has an important impact within the Edmonton church community and in certain human services areas. The Senior Minister must be effective in this context and environment. We believe that our Senior Minister must be radically welcoming and robustly Christian in their beliefs and in their actions.
3. First Baptist’s approach to spiritual formation, liturgical worship, and traditional music are elements that are important to it. The new Senior Minister will be expected to work within and advance these traditions. While FBC Edmonton does not expect to remain static into the future, these traditions must be the foundation of its growth and future trajectories. The Senior Minister is expected to uphold and maintain these approaches and traditions.
4. First Baptist Edmonton has held at least a decade of important and decisive debates and processes regarding who we welcome and affirm and the basis on which we welcome and affirm them. The foundation that these decisions have set are **not** subject to review or reconsideration, at least during the foreseeable future. The new Senior Minister must understand and accept this.
5. First Baptist Church Edmonton is not and has never been a church with a single or narrowly focused agenda. Our journey forward, seeking the peace and well-being of the city, and being a place that welcomes, provides safety to, and supports all of its members, will have a broad range of priorities and interests. The Senior Minister must recognize, respect and advance all of these priorities.
6. While First Baptist Church Edmonton has settled certain important debates and decisions, there are now important conversations facing the Congregation as to its next steps in identifying its priorities, how it will pursue those priorities and where it wants to be in the next period of time. **This will be an important need, and the next Senior Minister will need to have skills in working with and leading a Congregation that needs to address and answer the question “What now?” and, once that question has been answered, to develop strategies and action plans on how to get there.**

7. The leadership of the Senior Minister in this context will require the ability to provide insight, spiritual guidance and formation, inspiration and building broadly shared perspectives and decisions amongst the congregation. This leadership must be achieved collaboratively. The Senior Minister's leadership will have been successful if consensus has been achieved and if the Senior Minister has provided a sound foundation, perspectives, guidance and support to the Congregation in crafting a broadly supported vision and action plan to achieve the future it seeks. The Senior Minister will have failed if they attempt to impose a vision of their own or if they do not successfully and actively seek to build the support of the Congregation – and that failure would have a long term and negative impact on First Baptist Church Edmonton.
8. While it is common for the types and mix of skill sets that a Senior Minister needs to be able to demonstrate in order to be successful to shift over time, it is particularly important to ensure that the successful candidate has those that will be needed during the first five years after hiring. Accordingly, the interview and selection process for the Senior Minister will focus primarily on assessing the skill sets, strengths and abilities expected to be required during the five years from the date of hiring.
9. First Baptist Church Edmonton is blessed with, and values greatly, its Associate Ministers and Staff. The Senior Minister must work respectfully and effectively with all Associate Ministers and Staff, offering appropriate guidance, support, and supervision. First Baptist Church Edmonton has also appreciated hearing from a diversity of voices from the pulpit over the course of each year and would expect that this tradition would be encouraged and continued. It is not First Baptist Edmonton's practice to have a new Senior Minister replace existing staff.
10. The Congregation of First Baptist Edmonton comes from a broad range of backgrounds, has a broad range of abilities, capacities and life circumstances, and a broad range of needs. First Baptist Church Edmonton also interacts with a broad range of community members, being a downtown urban church. The new Senior Minister must have a reasonable degree of comfort understanding, working with and supporting all of these demographics and must be willing to strengthen, where their experience, comfort or connection is not as strong as it should be, their abilities and presence in those areas so that they can better support all elements of the Congregation. One area of particular importance is First Baptist Church Edmonton's journey of Indigenous Reconciliation.

11. First Baptist Church Edmonton is recognized as an important partner by several human services organizations in and near Edmonton. The Senior Minister is expected to be an effective and respected voice and ambassador for the Church with those organizations, and, where appropriate, be an effective and respected partner to them.
12. The new Senior Minister is following a long-serving, highly respected and much-loved predecessor. This is always a challenge for any successor in any institutional environment, and the new Senior Minister will need to have the self-confidence, abilities, and humility required to operate effectively in this context while they develop and confirm their own mark and contributions within the Congregation and on First Baptist Church Edmonton.
13. The Senior Minister must demonstrate competence in theological and biblical studies and teach and preach from Scripture, recognizing the Congregational decisions take previously by First Baptist Church Edmonton. Typically, the Senior Minister will have have a degree in Divinity, Theology or a similar program from a seminary or similar accredited institution.
14. There are various generic skills required of the Senior Minister. These include, but are not limited to:
 - A heart for and commitment to pastoral care, evidencing a sincere love for people
 - Working effectively with volunteers, committees and the Church Council
 - Taking on various administrative functions or ensuring that they are appropriately delegated and supervised
 - Staff supervision and support
 - Being aware of major financial issues and ensuring, where the Council is not already engaged on such matters, that they are both aware and engaged with them
 - Being an effective steward of all Church resources
 - Being an effective and respected voice for and representative of the Church in relation to all external partners or entities where the Senior Minister is involved
 - Being capable of meeting the legal and public safety requirements (e.g. criminal records check) to work with minors

- Ensure, in concert with the Church Council, that volunteer and other resources are deployed to meet the needs of the entire Congregation as effectively as possible and to the greatest extent possible.

15. The Senior Minister will be familiar with and willing to work in the context of Baptist polity and governance traditions and practices.

16. First Baptist Church Edmonton will give full, fair, and sincere consideration to every candidate who meets the criteria set out above, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

17. The Senior Minister will play a key role in working with the Congregation of First Baptist Church Edmonton, and others who are committed to the same objectives, to:

- Seek the peace and well-being (Shalom) of the city
- Celebrate the God-given worth of every person and seek to worship and act in solidarity with people displaced, silenced, and harmed by injustice
- Strive to create a welcome and safe place for people who have had a difficult history with organized religion
- Heal relationships damaged by our complicity with, and indifference to, forms of oppression, some of which include racism, sexism, homophobia, colonialism and classism.