

Thoughts on the Congregational Listening Event

Supporting the Search Committee's Work

Many of us are familiar with job descriptions that are often available when we apply for a job. They can provide important details about certain expectations, required skill sets, minimum qualifications and key responsibilities. Quite frequently, however, the very last time people read their job description is just before their interview for that job. This doesn't mean that job descriptions aren't important – they are.

Successful hiring goes well beyond simply finding a skilled and capable individual. It requires matching the needs of a particular situation (such as that of a Church congregation) with the skills offered by the individual who is eventually hired. A Church that is just starting out often has different needs than one that is well established but experiencing challenges adapting to new demographics or needs. A Church that requires significant fundraising to avoid having to close has different needs than one that is having capacity issues. A Church that feels a need to seek and pursue new or different priorities often has different needs than one that has already firmly committed to a particular path.

In order to know what skills it might need in its Senior Minister, it is important to understand what the range of needs and expectations that the Congregation might have. The perfect Senior Minister for certain periods in the life of a Church isn't necessarily the perfect Senior Minister for other periods that it may experience.

The Discussion Document that has been circulated in advance of this Listening Event is NOT a job description. It outlines some of the key assumptions that the Search Committee and the Church Council believe reflect some important expectations, aspirations, and priorities that should guide the search process.

The purpose of this Listening Event, is to hear what Congregation members believe is important, particularly in the context of the journey that members expect or hope that we will take as a congregation over the next few years. Many of the paths that we have been on will no doubt continue. Other paths, however, may no longer be ones that we choose to continue to prioritize in the same way that we have in the past. In other instances, we may wish to prioritize paths that we haven't in the past. We won't be defining a strategic plan or a course of action at this session, but it will certainly be helpful for the Search Committee to know what members believe we need to be thinking about as part of FBC's future as we try to identify an individual who will best help us to get there.

There will be an opportunity to ask questions about the process at this meeting, but its primary focus will be on hearing what type of journey Congregation members believe FBC will need and want to take on the years ahead.

If we are able to do this effectively, it will help greatly in matching the right individual to the needs and future that FBC Edmonton seeks to have.