



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 21st Century people, some of whom came from the 20th and others will enter the 22nd. 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.

“Very high” ranking of priorities for a new pastor*	
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%
“Essential” ranking of qualities for a new pastor*	
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.