

ASSOCIATE PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Report to Session, February 2020

We will ask the congregation to dissolve the APNC at the annual meeting. In anticipation of dissolution, we wish to provide the Session some brief concluding observations.

We are hopeful for the future of SVPC. We reviewed the applications of approximately 100 candidates, most of whom were very well-qualified. These candidates affirmed the mission set forth in the Mission Study Report Update. They saw—and even helped us see better—our church’s ministry potential.

We did good work and represented SVPC well to candidates and others. We drafted a Mission Study Report Update and a Ministry Information Form (MIF) that were informative and inspiring. We developed and conducted a good search process, including the review of applications, development of interview questions, and communication with candidates and their references. We worked well together, patiently hearing and respecting each other’s input. The division of labor was good. We received wise, compassionate counsel from our Presbytery COM representative, Executive Presbyter Joey Lee. We sincerely sought to discern God’s will for our church and community and believe we did so.

We gained valuable insights on the future of the church generally and SVPC specifically from our discussions with candidates. SVPC has great potential to reach out and minister to our community and especially the marginalized. To do so, we need to think differently about our ministry because of the profound changes that are occurring around us. We should expect our mission journey to be tough work without easy answers. We need to appreciate the importance of telling our individual and collective stories. We benefit from being known in and integral to our community. We need to build a healthy spiritual community; small-group interactions contribute to this. We need to recognize that the church is not physical structures but relationships with God and each other.

We encountered some difficulties in the search process, which we have reported through our Committee on Ministry representative. The PC(USA) resources for the search were not as helpful as they could be. The search process manual, *On Calling a Pastor*, lacks sufficient guidance on the special characteristics of associate pastor searches and on whether and how to involve pastoral or other staff in the search process. The PC(USA) Church Leadership Connection (CLC) software has an outdated user interface and is generally not very user-friendly. The definitions of the leadership competencies in the MIF are vague and ambiguous. Overall, the process takes too long to complete.

SVPC needs to address some specific issues before conducting a future search. Any future search would of course be preceded by a careful assessment of staffing needs under current circumstances and careful consideration of the position description. We also need to be sure that our projected financial resources are adequate to provide the Presbytery’s mandated compensation, including housing. In addition, the respective roles in the search and negotiation

process of the nominating committee, Personnel ministry team, Ministry Resources ministry team, and program staff need to be clearly defined and understood before the search process begins.

We were blessed to be asked to serve in this capacity. It was an honor to be selected to help bring about positive change to benefit the church for a generation. Through our many months of work, we became more connected to the mission of the church and the denomination. We felt the presence of God in prayer and in the dedicated service of all the committee members. We are blessed to have formed new friendships based on our mutual commitment to do God's will. While we are disappointed that we could not complete the search process, we remain positive about our church's potential for doing God's work in this community.

Kevin Coolidge, Gail McCaffrey, Bethann Merriam, Debbie Stoddard, Barry Vickrey, Val Weirauch (Matt Higgins served faithfully as a member until moving back to Australia for family reasons.)