

## **Pastoral Transition Process Frequently Asked Questions**

***Why is Clay stepping down as Senior Pastor?*** Clay was not asked to step down, nor did anyone in leadership suggest he consider it. After 10 years as Senior Pastor, Clay believes that the challenges posed by Covid-19 provide a unique opportunity to maximize the ministry effectiveness of Christ the King by providing fresh leadership to help answer and execute on the question of how best to fulfill the mission of Christ the King in post-Covid Houston while maintaining institutional stability by having Clay remain on staff as Associate Pastor. This leadership transition process avoids the disruption of a lengthy search process and the risky on-ramping of a new Senior Pastor who is likely less familiar with the history and philosophy of ministry of Christ the King.

***Why is the Session recommending a leadership transition process and not a traditional search process?*** The leadership transition process allows continuity to maximize our effectiveness as a church without disruption during a lengthy search process and on-boarding to Houston and the distinctives of Christ the King for the next Senior Pastor. The leadership transition process provides the creativity and energy of new leadership that will be important in a post-Covid context while retaining institutional history and stability with Clay's continued presence.

***Will the Pulpit Committee consider other candidates?*** The mandate for the Pulpit Committee is to consider the candidacy of John Trapp in accord with the Session's leadership transition process. So in the scope of their work, the process and the candidate go together. If the Pulpit Committee fails to recommend John Trapp as Senior Pastor or the congregation does not vote to receive him as Senior Pastor, the Pulpit Committee will be dissolved (having completed their mandated work), and the question regarding Clay stepping down as Senior Pastor will be remanded to the Session for a future recommendation to the congregation.

***Has a successful leadership transition process been accepted and demonstrated recently within the PCA?*** Yes, there is growing appreciation within the PCA for the wisdom of leadership transition to preserve continuity of mission and philosophy of ministry for established churches. Perimeter Church, a PCA "Mega-Church" outside of Atlanta, successfully transitioned from Randy Pope to Jeff Norris with Randy Pope remaining as Pastor of Life-on-Life Ministries. Christ Presbyterian Church, a PCA church with over 500 members in Oxford, MS, transitioned from Curt Presley to Les Newsom, with Curt Presley remaining as Associate Pastor. Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church, a PCA church in Tennessee similar to CTK in size transitioned from Joe Novenson to Brian Salter with Joe Novenson remaining as Associate Pastor. Even within the PCA itself, the PCA Retirement & Benefits leadership is transitioning senior leadership from Gary Campbell to Ed Dunnington with Gary Campbell remaining in a significant capacity.

***What does the Session mean by "pastoral transition process?" How long do you expect Clay to remain on staff?*** If the congregation chooses to call John Trapp as Senior Pastor, Clay will transition to Associate Pastor and remain on staff for an indefinite period of time. This transition

will take effect during the summer of 2021. While not putting limits on God, Clay's tenure on staff is likely measured in years and not months.

***How was the slate of candidates for the Pulpit Committee chosen and why is the Committee the size it is?*** The candidates for the Pulpit Committee were selected from the names submitted by the congregation. The goal was to represent as many parishes and ages as possible while maintaining a group small enough to fully engage on a focused mandate. The slate is also primarily composed of people with no first-hand ministry experience of John from his previous tenure at Christ the King, which allows the Committee to evaluate his candidacy with fresh eyes.

***Because the leadership transition process and the candidate have already been recommended by the Session, is this still a full vetting process for the Pulpit Committee and congregation?*** Yes. The candidates for the Pulpit Committee were recommended to the congregation only after affirming that they would fully examine John Trapp without prejudice for or against his candidacy. The Pulpit Committee works for the congregation and not for the Session. Because the candidate is not confidential, the congregation will also have an opportunity to interact with John during the process in ways that would be impossible during a traditional Senior Pastor search.

***Can members of the congregation direct questions to the Committee to ask the candidate?*** Yes, the congregation may pose questions through George Shannon, the Chair. While the work of the Committee will remain confidential, the congregation will also have the opportunity to ask questions to the candidate directly on a church-wide Zoom call on December 13.

***How will the congregation have access to John Trapp during this process?*** The discernment process will run on parallel tracks. The Pulpit Committee will conduct a full and thorough examination of John Trapp in a confidential manner while the congregation commits the time of Advent to prayer and discernment regarding the future of our church. The CTK website includes various ways for the congregation to engage with this process, including a church-wide Zoom call on December 13 at 5:30 pm. If he is recommended for election by the Pulpit Committee, John Trapp will come to Christ the King in person in January to preach.

***This process seems to be moving fast. What is driving the speed of the process?*** The January time-frame for the process envisioned by the motion respects the necessity of the Trapp family to give full notice to RUF and for RUF to find an excellent replacement as the next Campus Minister of UT if called by the congregation of CTK. The process to this point is designed to get to a place where the Pulpit Committee can undertake its limited scope with excellence and allow the congregation time for a process of prayer and discernment as well as access to John during the process, which would not be available to the congregation in a traditional search process. Typically, a recommended pastoral search candidate is presented to the congregation, preaches one week, and then voted upon the following week. This leadership transition process intends to provide eight weeks for prayer and discernment regarding this candidate before a congregational vote to call the candidate. From the start of Clay's discernment process in late spring to the proposed congregational vote in late January is nearly eight months, which highlights the thoroughness and deliberate nature of this process.

***Why is the Session recommending to the congregation John Trapp as a potentially qualified candidate for Senior Pastor of Christ the King?***

- He is aligned with the mission, vision and values of Christ the King, which were instilled in him during his previous tenure on our staff and to which he remains committed.
- He is committed to the primacy of worship and forged his understanding of corporate worship as a staff member at Christ the King.
- He has the trust of many families at Christ the King due to his excellent work as Youth Director and Family Ministries Director.
- He is a demonstrated gatherer and builder – having grown the RUF ministry at the University of Texas from 2 students to over 500 students in 7 years.
- He has recruited, trained and led staff – both in his capacities at Christ the King and in RUF at UT.
- He will be able to minister cross-generationally at Christ the King: Ministering “up” due to his trust with people familiar with his previous tenure; ministering “laterally” in order to train and motivate the next generation of leadership for the church; and ministering “down” due to his connections to colleges and universities in Texas and across the country from RUF.
- He is an excellent preacher and preaches on a weekly basis to students at RUF. Thus, he will not have to get accustomed to the rhythm of weekly preaching required from the Senior Pastor.
- He is highly relational, empathetic and warm, which will be particularly valuable as the church moves forward from this season of ministry during Coronavirus.
- He understands the city of Houston from his previous tenure at Christ the King and is excited to live here and establish his family in close physical proximity to the church.
- He is committed to the spiritual development of the staff and will make staff development a high priority.