



FAITHMANHATTAN
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Dear Faith family,

I am writing to let you know about some important developments in my life and in the life of Faith. For several years I have been in conversation with our elders about succession planning so that we might have a healthy transition from me to the next Senior Pastor at Faith. For context, I turned 64 in July and have been Senior Pastor here at Faith since 1988. My intention has been to continue in this role for about four more years.

However, over the past year or so my eyes and my voice have been failing. I am not able to read and study for sustained periods of time. Therefore my sermon preparation has become very fragmented and difficult. As well, I have a condition with my vocal chords that sometimes makes it challenging for me to preach on Sunday mornings. Studying the Word is still my great joy, but everything related to preaching has become very hard. After a season of reflection, prayer, and seeking counsel, I sense that I need to transition out of the Senior Pastor role here at Faith sooner than I had planned. Honestly, this realization makes me very sad; but I do sense that this is God's leading and timing. God has been so very kind to me during this season.

I realize that this is unexpected news to most of you. Please know that Brenda and I love you dearly and plan to remain in Manhattan and at Faith after I am no longer Senior Pastor. You are our church family, and we want to continue serving alongside you and walking with you into the future. My specific role at Faith after I'm no longer Senior Pastor won't be finalized until my successor is identified and in place. But I, along with our leadership, will discern ways that I might continue to use my gifts and experience at Faith and in our community.

"Every pastor is an interim pastor" is a noteworthy adage that is often mentioned in the context of long pastorates and succession planning. Even though I've served here for a long time, my assignment as Senior Pastor at Faith isn't permanent. God redirects and reassigns His people. And I am confident that God will lead us to the person whom He wants as my successor. After all, God cares about the health and fruitfulness of Faith Manhattan Church far more than any of us do. He really does.

The Succession Process:

Earlier this year, in consultation with our elders, we formed a Succession Team to outline and implement a succession plan for me as Senior Pastor at Faith. This team is comprised of Nathan Mead (chair), Anita Peterman, Tricia Holliday, Allyn Weddle, Paul Scheele, Sarah Beyer, Faryn Schulte, Brian Anderson, and me. Each of these persons brings something valuable to the team. I am very thankful for the commitment that each has to the Lord and to our church.

The Succession Team is currently interviewing firms that specialize in pastoral searches. These firms are able to surface qualified candidates who might be a great fit for Faith Manhattan in terms of our theology, culture, and ministries. We are also in the final stages of creating a Search Team that will work with the search firm we select. The Search Team will be comprised primarily of individuals on the Succession Team.

We will likely begin a search for my successor at the first of 2024. These searches can take anywhere from 6 to 18 months. We will provide regular updates along the way. If you have questions, feel free to reach out to anyone on our Elder Board, Succession Team, or Search Team.

Please, please seek God and pray for his leading, protection, and provision throughout the succession process. Now more than ever we need to trust in the Lord wholeheartedly.

With deep affection,
Steve