

THE SEARCH FOR PASTOR NEXT

Cornerstone Bible Church of Middlefield, Ohio has begun the process of searching for God's man to be the next Lead Pastor. After reading the requirements below, if you would like to learn more and enter into consideration for the position, please begin the application process by completing the brief questionnaire at the end of this job description.

Character

As to his character, Pastor Next must be above reproach and qualified according to the following standards:

"It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Timothy 3:1-7).

"namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." (Titus 1:6-9).

"Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:2-4).

Convictions

Because of the high priority that God's Word places on the importance of sound doctrine and the priority of preaching (2 Timothy 4:1-6; Titus 2:15), it is required that Pastor Next be a man of deep personal biblical conviction. While Cornerstone prefers a man who has been professionally trained at a reputable Bible college or seminary, we are primarily concerned that his ministry has a provenness of fulfilling 2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

More specifically, CBC is an evangelical church with a strong emphasis on the primary doctrines essential to the gospel and salvation which are of first importance (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). They are unmoved on the inerrancy, infallibility, and authority of the Bible. They are clear and bold on the biblical teaching of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. They also have a high view of God and His work in salvation, the rightful place of Christ as Lord in the life of a believer, and are committed to the sufficiency of Scripture as the sole guide for faith and practice. There is no question about the Person and Work of Christ as the perfect God-man whose work of atonement is sufficient to save all who come to Him and His triumphant resurrection from the dead, bodily. The Person of the Holy Spirit, the physical and literal Second Coming of Christ — all the major tenets of the faith are boldly proclaimed and widely cherished here. Certainly Pastor Next must have theological beliefs that are compatible with Cornerstone's doctrinal beliefs.

In matters of doctrines that are of secondary importance, Pastor Next must recognize that there are some differences within the church and leadership, and thus he will take the pulpit of a congregation and Eldership in process. Pastor Next will be expected (and allowed) to preach his convictions with clarity and authority (Titus 2:15), but in gentleness. He must be a man whose approach exemplifies patience and wisdom. He will need to set tone for learning and growing theologically, with the result that his teaching strengthens and unifies CBC around the truth. Avoiding dogmatism on secondary issues, he must preach and lead with as much authority as the Bible offers clarity about specific topics. As such, Cornerstone seeks a Lead Pastor whose commitment to expository preaching allows him to shepherd the beliefs of this congregation over time.

The areas where Pastor Next will find great unity and agreement with the Elders of CBC (on secondary matters) are:

- Literal six-day creation and historical accounts described in Genesis 1-11
- Literal-historical grammatical method of interpretation
- The sufficiency of Scripture for all matters of life and godliness
- Strong male headship in the home and church
- Church discipline as essential to preserve the unity and purity of the church

(The Elders are also clear-headed and Biblical on matters of abortion, homosexuality and gay marriage, "woke-ism" and Critical Race Theory, etc. They are on the clearly biblical and conservative side of the hot button issues of the day.)

The areas where Pastor Next will find the Elders and flock of CBC still in process are:

- Each of the doctrines of grace, sometimes known as Calvinism (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints).
- The continuation or cessation of the miraculous spiritual gifts (primarily prophecy and speaking in tongues).
- End times details such as the timing of the rapture (pre-trib, mid-trib, post-trib) and the future of Christ's kingdom to Israel in the millennium (pre-mil, post-mil, a-mil).

Discussions around these secondary matters are currently healthy, but in the interest of disclosure to an incoming Pastor, they are yet to be settled, in which some Elders are on different ends of the spectrum or admittedly unclear.

What can be affirmed by the Elders on these matters (at the date of this writing) is as follows:

- As to the sovereignty of God in salvation, many passages extol and declare the absolute right of God to do as He wills with His creation, and many passages place total responsibility on the sinner to respond to God's gracious offer of salvation through Christ. Both are true, but divine sovereignty and human responsibility remain shrouded in mystery that is a paradox in our minds, but not in God's.
- As to the continuity of the miraculous gifts, the Elders affirm that God is a supernatural God — the same God we read about in the Old and New Testaments. He is able to do whatever He wills, including interrupt the natural order of the world He made by miraculous activity. However, the primary means by which God guides His creation through providence, and we should not expect miraculous activity to be the norm, nor do we expect someone with supernatural gifts (i.e. a healer) as were present in the apostolic age. God still performs miracles, but primarily in answer to prayer.
- As to the end times, CBC believes that the return of Christ should motivate our hope, purity, and evangelistic zeal, and that the details of the timing are harder to understand (2 Peter 3:16), but as they become clearer with further study, will stir that motivation afresh.

The Elders are committed to study these doctrines so that they can be strive to be "sound in doctrine and able to refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9), and support Pastor Next in his efforts to lead with the pulpit.

Commitment

In terms of his ministry responsibility, Pastor Next is a steward of his spiritual gifts. In particular CBC desires a man who possesses the gifts of teaching so he can faithfully deliver the word of God in public and private, leadership so that he can guide and direct people into the will of God, exhortation so he can press the truth into others lives practically with comfort, encouragement and rebuke, and mercy so that he can care for people in their moments of greatest brokenness and reach the lost within the sphere of his influence. It is the expectation that Pastor Next would invest approximately 50-55 work hours on average weekly, in which he will divide his time doing much studying, praying, public preaching and small group teaching, consistent discipling of leaders, some counseling, minimal administration, and intentional community engagement.

Capacity

In terms of his actual ability to lead, Pastor Next must be a shepherd. He must be a man who loves people and has a capacity to cultivate meaningful relationships that are life-giving, trustworthy, and long-lasting. Cornerstone needs a pastor who invites relational authenticity by his openness and transparency, out of which he builds teams. As a team-builder, he is a man who can recognize God's work in other's lives, then equip and resource everyone on his team with what they need to succeed. He can cast a vision, provide an example to follow,

and give others an opportunity to shoulder Kingdom responsibility. He must be able to give people a clear mental picture of what their lives would look like if they did what the Bible says, but also motivate and inspire others to pursue the cause of Christ and embrace change. Thus he must possess compelling communication abilities that allow him to facilitate discussions that lead to consensus, resulting in unity and action.

While he must be clear in his vision and relationships, he must secondly be a decision maker who can operate with a practical ability to activate the vision and get results. He must possess a practical intuition that is both strong and confident and thus articulate simple goals, provide clear communication, and take urgent action. As a leader of leaders, he must possess a practical sense of how authority works within an organization. Cornerstone doesn't need a responder, it needs an initiator who is resourceful, even if he must at times learn as he leads by doing. At times, he must be willing to move forward without all the information, but not be afraid to course correct .

Finally, Pastor Next must have the kind of problem-solving ability that enables him to assess a complex or difficult situation and recommend creative solutions. Even in the fray of ministry, he must demonstrate a logical and strategic thinking level-headedness in chaos without being caught up in frenzy of the moment. He should be resourceful and can think outside the box to develop plans and processes that become solutions and systems.

Chemistry

As for his age and station in life, Cornerstone would be best served by a man in his 40s or early 50s, who spans the age gap between the more experienced older Elders, and the younger, newer Elders. He must be culturally appropriate to the unique suburb/rural culture of Eastern Geauga County, Ohio, which holds the fourth largest Amish settlement in the world. Cornerstone prefers a man who is married with children who are beyond the toddler years and who places a high priority on family. He must relate to kids and make room for them in his life and ministry. The church also needs a leader who is moderate and careful with the exercise of his liberties in the areas of alcohol, tobacco, movies, and music. In a word, he carries himself in a way that is respectable.

Given the conservative nature of Middlefield and the surrounding areas, and especially given the current hostile political climate, CBC seeks a man who is conservative in his political convictions and reasonable about the way he leads the church through controversial issues. He must be biblical, clear, and winsome in his stance on issues such as gay marriage, abortion, critical race theory, and all other hot-button issues. He must be gentle with those who disagree and be able to correct them with Scripture (2 Timothy 2:24-26).