

Bruce:

We have all suffered a loss which may cause us to feel we are grieving – and that is ok, right and good. This congregation has loved Ryan. We need to process this loss.

We cannot replace a Ryan Balsan any more than we could replace an Eric Dorville, a Langdon Palmer or a Bill Kemp. We have to trust that we are in God's hands and He will again call the right person to lead us.

We know that we are in a good place with a bright future. You are the ones that make the future bright owing to your love of our Lord. The pastor does not make the church but the people, with their understanding of the power of the cross of Christ, come together to explore, learn and live in the power of scripture. It is the people, listening to God's call that make the church.

We know and our Session recognizes that as long as we are following our Lord and Savior, He is in control, and He continues to bless our being and our work. We are never alone for we have the Spirit, each other and we also have the Presbytery of Philadelphia who is ready and willing to assist in the process ahead. In fact, the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery has already met with our Session to answer questions and will meet with us again on August 6 to help as we formalize the next steps before Ryan leaves.

Paul:

Right now, our immediate need is your prayers. We ask that you pray for the Session and that you pray for us to discern God's call – that we will hear and see His lead and follow it to the person He has already called to serve with us. Presbyterians are a connectional church—we do things together! We believe the movement of God's Spirit is best discerned together. When it comes to the process of calling a pastor, we talk about a three-fold call: the pastor, the congregation, and the Presbytery. All are involved in the discernment process.

The traditional option to be followed is that the congregation forms a Pastor Nominating Committee. We understand there are some new options offered by Presbytery that Session needs to hear more about before making a decision on the path. Should the path be PNC, which is probable, then the congregation will elect the members who will serve on that committee. The Church Nominating committee will do the work of seeking members to be presented for election as they do for other officers and ordained positions. The Presbytery Committee on Ministry will help guide these steps.

Likely, during the call process, the Session will call a temporary pastor to help us through the search time. Our planned meeting with the Committee on Ministry in August will be to make decisions about understanding all options and then filling this need.

If you have questions, do ask an elder. Know that we may not have answers yet but know we want to hear from you. We will give your comments and thoughts full consideration. There will be elders present before and after services to hear your input.

Bruce:

As we walk together, as we grieve over our loss, as we celebrate the new beginnings for Ryan and Jen, as we wish them well, know that in all things, your Session is trusting that God is leading; that we as the whole church family are working together to invite and connect seekers to know, grow and serve Jesus with us. May it be that our time without a pastor be a time when we further our commitment together to this community and to our Lord and Savior!

Thank you for listening.