

1. God will be with this church at all times.

We are not forsaken. God is with our congregation. “I will never leave you or forsake you,” (Heb 13:5). Ministers will come and go. Only God will never leave us. And the presence of God is more vital to the life of the church.

2. God is in control.

God “works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11). Do we believe that? This ministerial transition is not happening outside of the will of God. God is working this according to the counsel of his will. So the question is not, “Who is in control?” God is in control. The question is, “Will we rest in him by trusting him?”

3. God plans good out of this transition.

God has promised that he works all things together for the good of his people (Rom 8:28). Is our church part of his people? If so, this transition is included in “all things”? Therefore, we can rest assured that good will come from it. That’s how awesome God is. Therefore, we walk forward in faith.

4. It’s okay to be sad.

While good will come out this ministerial transition, that doesn’t remove the sadness of losing Steve and Christine. The Ephesian elders wept at Paul’s goodbye: “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship” (Acts 20:36-38).

The Ephesians knew that God would be with them, that he was in control, and that he was going to bring good out of this transition. Nevertheless, they wept. And it’s okay to be sad. It’s actually a way of saying thank you to both God and Steve & Christine for what they have given us.

5. Our Ministry must go on.

The Great Commission does not say, “Go therefore and make disciples . . . **if you have a minister.**”

We must not forget that ministry must continue in the **interim**. The Great Commission doesn’t include any conditionals. Will ministry become a bit harder without a minister leading? Probably so, Steve has set the groundwork and Ephesians 4:11-12 by equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. In the interim, we must make sure ministry continues. So let’s get to work!

6. The church must not scatter.

Jesus promised the flock would scatter at his crucifixion (Mat 26:31). That’s exactly what happened. The same often happens in churches during ministerial transition. Because “their” minister is no longer there or ministry begins to lag, people trickle away. Some reasons for going might be legitimate, but this is also be the time in which we, the congregation should most strongly gather together for support and encouragement. We need to recognize the temptation to scatter and work more diligently to stay bound together in unity and love. This will be a season of testing for us. With God’s help, we will endure it.

The new Webnet process on a page

• Contact a regional minister to talk through the process and requirements **Start**

1

- Complete a PVL (Pastoral Vacancy List) form and return to regional minister
- Work through a satisfactory process of discernment as a Church.
- Complete a Covenantal Agreement and return to regional minister
- Complete Church & Minister profile, agree terms of appointment at a special church meeting and return church profile to regional minister

Prepare

2

- Review ministers' profiles and contact all applicants
- Informal meeting with potential minister(s)
- Invite (a) minister(s) to an informal 'preach-with-a-squint'
- Informal meeting with the church 'preach-with-a-squint'
- Obtain references for non-accredited ministers
- Check with regional minister for confidential information

Select

3

- Special church meeting to decide to invite to 'preach-with-a-view'
- Formally meet the church 'preach-with-a-view'
- Special church meeting to decide whether to call a minister
- Contact minister following special church meeting

Call

4

1. It offers a good framework to follow.

Calling a new Baptist minister is a complex and involves the whole Church. Having a process to follow and one that is available for all to see makes it simpler for everyone to feel included and see where we are.

2. We want to end up with a Baptist accredited minister.

Whilst our constitution doesn't insist on a Baptist accredited minister, clause 21.2 & 21.3 does recommend this is the preference. Working with Webnet (formerly WEBA) gives us access to the pool of Baptist ministers exploring a move away from where they were called previously.

3. The Webnet process has evolved since the last time we used it

One of the key criticisms of the old process was that it felt like someone else chose who we got to see and the church was removed from the shortlisting process. This is no longer the case, we get to see all the potential candidates who are interested in a calling at GHBC and we get to shortlist them. Webnet are however still available to offer opinions and advice throughout the selection process.

4. We are not tied into the process

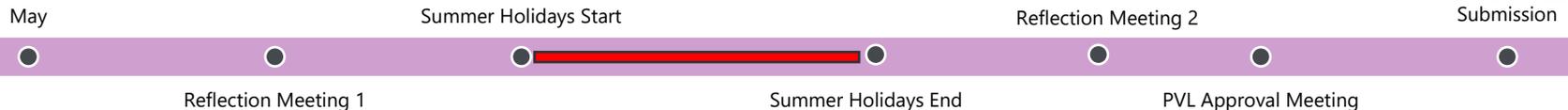
Should the Church at any point on this journey feel that it is necessary we have the ability to refine or move away from the framework.

1. INITIAL CONVERSATION

Contact your Regional Minister who will arrange a meeting with your Leadership Team, provide you with the Settlement Process pack of forms and talk through the Settlement Process. This is the beginning of a process of discernment regarding your sense of purpose and priorities for the future.



- Deacons have met with Nigel Coles from Webnet (previously WEBA) & discussed the revised process for recruiting a new minister
- We have received our Settlement Pack, which consists of these forms (all on our Website)
 - **Churches in Transition overview and checklist** - Summary process
 - **Churches in Transition walking together through pastoral vacancy** - Detailed process
 - **Pastoral Vacancy List (PVL) form for Churches** - Covers Church details and links to the church profile
 - **Webnet Settlement Covenant form** – What's expected from GHBC and Webnet whilst we jointly look for a new minister (Not a contractual document)



2. DISCERNING & SHARING 'WHERE YOU'RE AT'

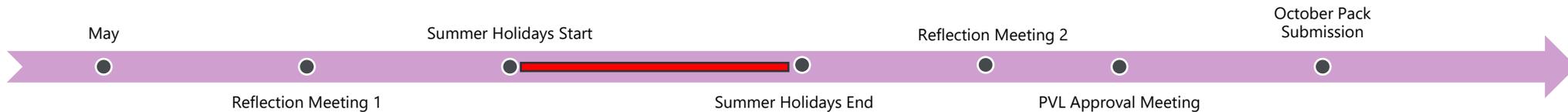
1. Your regional minister will encourage you to be PATIENT and will arrange to meet with the church on several occasions to help you prayerfully consider the following:

- What kind of people is Jesus wanting to send out into our community?
- What kind of church creates those kinds of people?
- What kind of leadership creates this kind of church?

2. Your church prepares a Church Profile and ethos statement (a Guidance document will help you compile this wisely). You will also need to prepare a very short summary of your Church Profile (a mini-Profile). You also need to complete a PVL form and the Covenant Agreement supplied by your Regional Minister.

3. The church's vacancy is then listed in the PVL (Pastoral Vacancy List) – a secure area on the Baptists Together website.

4. **Before your Church Profile and PVL form are sent to the Ministry team you will need to work out a timeline** – identifying the window of time in which you would like to receive and consider the profiles of ministers exploring settlement. This will be published alongside your mini-profile on the PVL.



As a diaconate we have started the work for this phase, this is where we need your prayers & involvement if we are to meet the proposed October timeline. All of the documents listed below are available on the Church website in the members area

Next Steps

Read and review our revised draft Church Ethos Statement, Church profile and Minister spec

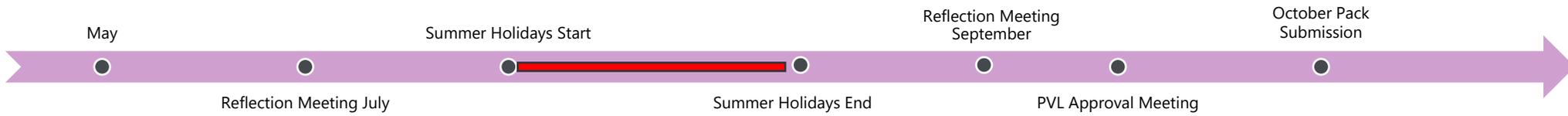
Pray & reflect on them. Ask yourself if you want to be part of the team that leads this for the Church

Attend Special church meetings to share your views & listen to other members views

Vote at a Special members meeting to approve the documents needed to start our search for who God wants to be our next Minister

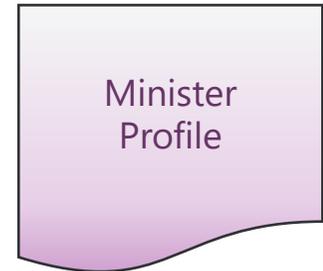
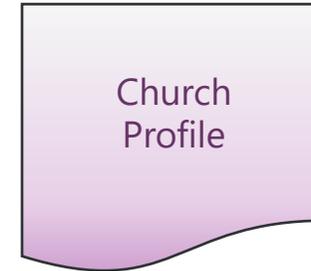
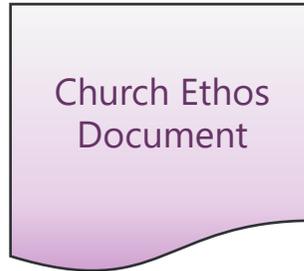
What is special about each of the key documents we are all involved in producing?

- **Church Ethos document** – Describes the fundamental character or spirit of GHBC; the underlying sentiment that informs the beliefs, customs, & practices of GHBC
- **Church Profile document** – Provides prospective ministers with their first opportunity to discover something about our church, its activities & the community it is set in
- **Minister Profile** – Describes the skills and attributes we would like our next minister to have



June

- Individual & Homegroup reflection
- Feedback to Diaconate on drafts



July

- Church meeting to reflect on updates
- Focused Prayer meetings
- Search team review meetings

August

- Holidays

September

- Surveys & FAQ's
- Sessions on each document
- Updates as required

October

- Special members meeting to approve pack
- Pack submission to Webnet

How do we review these documents & discern Gods will as a Church?



October 2022

July 2023

Process

1. You need to identify who will be part of your Search Team (i.e. the group who'll lead the process of seeking for a minister). This may be your Leadership Team or a mixture of some people on your Leadership Team and a few other respected and wise church members who will begin to discern who God is calling.

2. Ministers who have access to the PVL then express their interest by sending their Profile to you. You will have already specified a date by which you would like to receive such profiles.

3. In your discernment you will need to be guided in your discernment by what you have agreed as a church, the church you would like to become and the kind of ministry you are seeking (Section 2D and E in the church profile).

Actions for us

Pray for guidance on who we want to make up our "search team". These will make the team who shortlist & work with diaconate and Webnet to present back to members meetings potential candidates.

Note: A large proportion of this process needs to be confidential. Some applicants may not have informed their home Church they are exploring a move. We will be as transparent as we can be without compromising an applicant.

October 2022

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Process

4. Your Search Team prayerfully considers all the Ministerial Profiles you receive. Seek out those that God is bringing to your attention. Notify everyone who has sent you their Profile of your intention either to meet informally or to not proceed any further.

5. Arrange an informal conversation, virtually or in person with those God has highlighted to you.

6. If at this stage you have more than one prospective candidate in mind, you may invite them (all) to preach at one of your services (without any obligation to proceed further beyond this stage).

If you have only one prospective candidate in mind you may also want to consider inviting them to meet informally with the wider church.

October 2022

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Process

7. Search team to meet to prayerfully consider the recent events (preaching/ meeting), followed by a Special Church Meeting, to decide whether to invite a candidate to return for a 'preach with a view' and final meeting(s) with the church. (At this stage, please engage with only one candidate until an invitation to the pastorate is offered or not).

- We may repeat this cycle a number of times before we find a candidate that we feel God is calling to GHBC
- Ideally, we see the search team being made up of a mix of diaconate and senior church members, probably six in total
- Where possible we will share information with the broader Church if an applicant gives us permission to

2023

2024

1. A Special Church Meeting should be arranged following the formal visit/'preach with a view' and prayerfully decide whether to issue a call to the minister.

Before you issue an invitation/ 'Call' your designated church contact should ask your regional minister if there is any confidential information which the minister is required to disclose.

2. All those who settle through the settlement process will be asked to obtain a DBS enhanced disclosure through their association once they have settled and **BEFORE** they start in their new ministry setting.

If you appoint a non-accredited minister, you yourselves will need to undertake a DBS enhanced disclosure once you appoint a nonaccredited minister and **BEFORE** they start in their new ministry setting.

- A Calling would be decided at a special members meeting following a formal visit to the church and a preach with a view.

What does it say about Ministers

21.1 The Church may have a Minister or more than one Minister or no Minister. Where a Minister is appointed, it is expected that they will become a Member of the Church.

21.2 A Minister of this Church shall accept the Beliefs being the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle.

21.3 Where the Church has a Minister she or he shall be in relationship with the Baptist Union and the Association normally expressed by being on the Baptist Union's Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry.

21.4 The Minister, whether or not they are on the Register of Persons Accredited for Ministry shall be supportive of the Church's relationships with other Baptist Churches, the Association and the Baptist Union.

21.5 The tasks fulfilled by Ministers will vary depending on individual ability and gifting, but a Minister is normally expected to be involved in the Activities of the Church with an emphasis on the leading of worship and prayer, the teaching of the Christian faith and the pastoral care of individuals. The Minister shall work with the Church towards achieving its Purpose through its Activities. *

21.6 Notwithstanding any legal status afforded to a Minister by statute the Church recognises that the Minister and the Church are in a Covenant relationship based on Christian love and trust and mutual accountability. A Minister shall be in a relationship of mutual accountability with the other Charity Trustees and also with the Church Members.

22 THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF MINISTERS

22.1 When the Church is seeking to appoint a Minister, it will normally consult the appropriate staff within the Association before commencing any appointment process and follow, so far as practicable, the Baptist Union's procedures and recommended terms for the settlement of Ministers.

22.2 A Minister will be appointed or removed by a resolution of the Church Members at a Special Church Members' Meeting at any time. **

22.3 Where a Special Church Members' Meeting is considering the dismissal of a Minister the Minister shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Members' Meeting and to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing so that the Church Members' Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether the appointment should be terminated.

22.4 The Church and the Minister shall normally agree 'terms and conditions of appointment' including termination procedures based on the standard terms of appointment published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

23 THE REMUNERATION OF MINISTERS

Notwithstanding the fact that any Minister or Ministers appointed by the Church are Charity Trustees they will be entitled to be paid an agreed and reasonable remuneration or stipend out of the funds of the Church.

* Any Minister serving the Church will by the nature of their work be a Charity Trustee.

** Many Baptist Churches would only call a Minister if the vote exceeded the two thirds required at a Special Church Members' Meeting, see clause 13.9 but also refer to clause 13.10. Churches contemplating the presentation of a resolution to remove a Minister should take appropriate legal advice and are advised to contact the Association.



Declaration of Principle

A three-part “Declaration of Principle” forms the basis of understanding for all who belong to the Baptist Union. It was introduced in 1873 with the intent of holding in union Baptists with widely different theological understandings, and progressively refined (1904, 1906, and 1938).

It is rooted in Jesus’ Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) with its threefold pattern of authority, baptism and mission. The first clause of the Declaration focuses on the absolute authority of Jesus Christ, with clause two on baptism into the life of God. Clause three is all about mission.

The Basis of the Baptist Union is:

1. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.
2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who ‘died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day’.
3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.

For further information visit baptist.org.uk/dop