



Dear Church Members of First Baptist Church – Murphysboro,

Nearly a year ago the church Leadership Council was notified of Pastor Shaker’s intent to retire in December of 2021. At that point, the Leadership Council initiated the process of a search committee, named that committee, and the work began in May 2021. The process has been lengthy, at times discouraging yet rewarding and this committee believed from the beginning that through prayer, faith and diligence God would provide the right candidate, at the right time.

The members of the committee are now fully convinced of God’s power and promise and as a committee we are prepared to present the Candidate that God has called to serve as the next Pastor at First Baptist. Throughout the process, things that seemed like coincidences were God’s plan, things that did not seem possible were made possible by God’s will, and those markers that had been established through the detailed work of the committee have been met and exceeded two-fold.

The Candidate, we the search committee present to you is a young man wise and mature beyond his years. He spent the last 15 years of his life preparing, training, and being mentored. He is spiritually gifted for the position. He feels directly called by God to this position at our Church. He relates his ministry life experience to Timothy. He strives to live a life above reproach, being an example to all people, working to reflect Jesus and share His love. He is faithful and gentle to his wife of five years and manages his home and family well, seeking to raise their two-year-old daughter and all future children in the ways of the Lord! They currently live on a small two-acre homestead with a garden, fruit trees, chickens, three dogs, and a large parrot. They enjoy having guests in their home and live humbly. We believe and trust he will teach the Truth of God’s Word.

The Candidate was drawn to FBC because of how he perceived the church as a Body of Christ, as well as one large family. Prior to applying to FBC he took the time to get to know our church and the community of Murphysboro. He believes, after further research and all the praying he has done, that God has provided him and his family with an answer. In his own ministry profile, he states:

"We love being outside, as a matter a fact being outside is a big part of our ministry, ministry through activities. I want to be involved in people’s lives, I want to do activities and spend time in fellowship, and not just me with people on Sunday mornings. I want to do it as a family, multigenerational. I want your sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, and your grandparents all at church and if you don’t have family at church. I want the church to be your family! I want us to be sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents taking care of each other, support each other, and love each other as a family. The way Christ loves us! That’s a big part of my passion and my drive." - the Candidate

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Currently the Candidate serves as the Associate Pastor of Family, Youth, and Children Ministries in Ohio. He preaches 10 to 15 times annually. As well, he manages the Church websites, graphics, video editing and uploading, recording and audio, manages Church weekly phone call and text updates, home visits, hospital visits, funerals, weddings, and leads volunteers and employees. After the Lead Pastor left the church abruptly, our Candidate was called on to support the church in a more active role as a Pastor and help the church find a new Lead Pastor. As he took on more responsibility within the church, spending more time preaching from the pulpit and serving the church, it was then he believed God was calling him to serve as a Lead Pastor and God was leading him elsewhere.

Background and History on the Candidate:

The Candidate received his degree, a Bachelor of Science in Church Ministries at Clearwater Christian College, Clearwater, FL. He first worked as a Camp Leader at Soul Adventures Camp where he assisted with creating and founding a camp for over a 1,000 youth, aged 5-14 years old, where he planned, led, and implemented various outside activities. He then became the Youth Activities Director at Skycrest Christian School where he organized and led projects/activities for 25+ students daily after school. He directed and assisted with after school teaching and tutoring and well as responsible for fundamental counselling and support.

He went to work for Gateway Baptist Church as a Youth Pastor, starting out with no youth at all. As a Youth Pastor he worked to build a youth group that averaged on a regular basis to 30 kids and through special events and activities as many as 70 attending. He continued to grow by teaching on Sundays and Wednesday and occasionally filling in at the pulpit.

He prayerfully felt that God was leading him into the mission field where he traveled the world living out of a 45-pound backpack for nearly a year. The work included missions in Europe, Serbia, Albania, Greece, and Macedonia where he partnered with United Nations Disaster Relief helping with the Syrian Refugee Crisis. He traveled to Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia, and Botswana where he partnered with local orphanages and medical NGOs to help with HIV positive children. He was led to work in Asia and the Philippines to offer aid to prevent and end human trafficking.

The search committee is excited to share with you and present to you the Candidate for the next Pastor of First Baptist Church. Please join us on January 15 & 16 for the Candidate weekend as we get to know the Candidate and his family, share in God's plan for our church and spend time in prayer as we complete the final steps of the process to call our next minister.

In service to our church and its members – the search committee,

Dale Blaise, Dave Ardrey, Gina Hunziker, Tony Stamm, Adreanna Pilz, Melinda Guthman, Zane Goad