

## **TWELVE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)**

### **Q1: Why is Matt leaving?**

A1: There are a variety of reasons for this transition. First, transitions have to occur at some point. They are inevitable: Moses had to hand off to Joshua, and Paul to Timothy. Second, Matt's age (currently 66) makes this inevitability more of a reality. Third, Matt wants to use his many decades of pastoral experience to train and equip the next generation of leaders. As Matt says, "God's call in the next phase of ministry is for me to train godly, Christ-centered, durable leaders who spread vision and passion for the local, regional, and worldwide advance of Jesus Christ and His gospel." Fourth, Matt loves Stone Hill, this particular local church, but he also loves the worldwide church and is seeking to use his gifts to serve the larger church by training younger leaders. Fifth and finally, we want to intentionally and thoughtfully transfer pastoral leadership on to the next generation at Stone Hill Church so that God may continue to bless and shepherd this church in the years ahead.

### **Q2: What is the transition timeline?**

A2: Together, after months of collaboration and prayerful consideration, Pastor Matt and the board have confirmed that Matt's transition will take place July 2020. As the Elders search for Stone Hill's next leader, Matt will maintain his role and assist in the leadership transition, providing every opportunity for the next leader of Stone Hill to find success in continuing the ministry heartbeat of Stone Hill in our community.

### **Q3: Will Matt continue to teach during the transition?**

A3: Yes, Matt will continue to teach and lead until the arrival of the new Senior Pastor.

### **Q4: Where is Matt going?**

A4: Princeton has been Matt and Karen's home for many years. They do not have plans to move out of Princeton.

### **Q5: What about Karen? How does she feel about the transition?**

A5: At each step along the way, Karen has been intimately involved with Matt in this process. Both Karen and Matt have repeatedly communicated that they feel at peace that the Lord is leading them and Stone Hill into a new phase of life.

### **Q6: How will the next Senior Pastor be identified?**

A6: The search for a new senior pastor involves two components. First, it is a faith journey. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God. So we are going to draw near to God and believe that He is who He says He is, i.e. just, awesome, holy,

and gracious. We will trust in Him with all our heart. We won't lean on our own understanding, but acknowledge Him through every step of the search process, knowing He will lead us to the one He is already raising up to be our next Senior Pastor. Second, our faith in God's guidance leads to concrete actions. God's wisdom from Proverbs repeatedly reminds us that He is in control of this process and that we have to plan and prepare as well (please see references at the end). The Elder Board has partnered with a ministry placement consultancy and will form a Candidate Review (Search) Team (CRT) to assist in the search for the next Senior Pastor at Stone Hill. Join us in this faith journey.

**Q7: What does this mean for the future of Stone Hill?**

A7: Stone Hill has always been a place that shows and grows in God's grace. We are excited about continuing to extend God's grace to our community and growing in God's grace as a church. This is a season where we are all prayerfully seeking God's wisdom in identifying the next senior pastor who will provide leadership into the coming decades of growing in and showing God's grace in Princeton, the Northeast, and throughout the world.

**Q8: What does the title "Pastor Emeritus" mean?**

A8: Emeritus is an Anglicized Latin word referring to one who has earned his discharge by faithful service. Wow, how appropriate for Pastor Matt. In our context the title may be seen as an expression of 1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching." As we look back on Pastor Matt's 33 plus years of pastoral leadership at Stone Hill with respect and thankfulness, it seems right and fitting to give such an honorary title for his faithful service to this church and the gospel.

**Q9: Who is overseeing the current leadership of the church?**

A9: Our church is Elder led. Our staff manages the day-to-day operations of the church, while our Elders care for the staff, affirm the forward vision, and manage the legal entity and progress of the church. During this time of transition, our staff and senior leadership team will continue to lead the day-to-day operations, while Elders will oversee the Senior Pastor search process.

**Q10: Will Matt pick a new Senior Pastor for us?**

A10: Matt will have input into the search process. We will seek to hear from his wisdom and experience. But the process is a search conducted by the CRT, approval by the Elders and then the congregation.

**Q11: Who are the members of the CRT?**

A11: The Elders have appointed Curt Richmond and Doug Megill as succession Elder and staff representative respectively. Other members of the Committee will be announced when appointed.

**Q12: How can I stay up-to-date on the transition process?**

A12: Our website at [stonehillprinceton.org/succession](http://stonehillprinceton.org/succession) will be a great place to find current and up-to-date information about the search process and any news regarding the leadership transition. The Elders will be providing updated information as this process progresses in regular emails and during services. Also sign up for the Stone Hill eNewsletter at <http://www.stonehillprinceton.org/news/subscribe> to receive updates. If you have questions about the transition, please email the CRT at [succession@stonehillprinceton.org](mailto:succession@stonehillprinceton.org).

Like with any transition, some change is inevitable. But our commitment as a church to be a transforming community that engages the lost, makes disciples, and shows compassion will stay the same. We will continue to love God and love people and do everything we can to bring honor and glory to Jesus. This deliberate and detailed succession process was developed and implemented specifically to make the transition as smooth, seamless, and relational as possible.

Finally, **Is the process more about faith or planning?** It is both. We need humility as we trust God, seek advice and establish thoughtful detailed plans. The following scriptures are our foundation and starting point for succession. This is not a complete list.

**Proverbs 3:5-6** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**Proverbs 21:31** The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord.

**Hebrews 11:1** And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

**Proverbs 16:3** Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.

**I Corinthians 14:40** But all things should be done decently (properly) and in order.

**Proverbs 16:9** The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

**Proverbs 15:22** Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.

**James 2:14-26** "Faith Without Works Is Dead"