

Beginning to Take Next Steps from the Long-Range Plan

By Jim Segaar

The Long-Range Plan - *Be Different, Be Bold, Be Better* –was completed this summer by a planning team after conducting a series of focus groups with members of the congregation. Since then, the Diaconate has discussed the findings and recommendations, and members of the congregation took part in two Zoom discussion sessions about the plan. We are now beginning to address the Next Steps specified in the plan.

In September the Diaconate approved working on six next steps. These are:

- Pastoral Transition – Pastor Tim is retiring in February 2022, and we need to begin a search for a new pastor soon.
- Facilities – We need to determine how to address several issues with our current buildings, including findings of a seismic study, lack of parking, and significant issues related to accessibility.
- Senior Ministry – Build on efforts currently underway to reinvigorate our ministry to seniors.
- Anti-Racism – Begin the effort to become an anti-racist church.
- Small Group Ministries – Create a broad-based small groups ministry.
- Governance – Identify and propose to the congregation for approval changes to our Bylaws regarding governance at SFBC.

The Executive Committee has also agreed to form a Program Office to coordinate work relating to the plan and to help the congregation process change. Jim Segaar and Joyce Phillips have volunteered to work as the Program Office beginning now. Other resources may be added as we move forward.

It is important to remember that the only decisions that have been made to date are to begin work on these tasks. No decisions specific to the pastoral transition, facilities, or any of the other topics have been made. We are at the beginning of what will be a multi-year transformation. It is critical that the congregation be involved in all these discussions and decisions as we move forward.

Taskforces are being formed to work most of these next steps. Please contact President Harriet Platts at president@seattlefirstbaptist.org if you are interested in serving on one.

We will provide ongoing communication about this work in the Spire. We plan to write brief stories about each of the next steps listed above, publishing one article each week in the This Week email. All this information and more will be available on our website: <https://www.seattlefirstbaptist.org/long-range-planning.html>

We recognize that many members are grieving that some major changes will happen at SFBC, at a time when all our lives have been turned upside down by COVID-19. We are planning activities to help people process their grief as we get started with the work ahead. In a recent Baptist News Global article titled *Church leaders, please don't waste your transition crisis*, Bill Wilson wrote: "If we choose to simply grieve over what was, we will lose the opportunity to imagine what could be. This is where many churches are going to find themselves in the coming months and years."

Our goal in all this work is that we move forward as a congregation, as a community of people who care about each other and the world we live in. We desperately need your help, whether it be by working on a taskforce, including those involved in your prayers, or sharing a kind thought with others as this work progresses.