



Purpose of the Listening Sessions

First Baptist Church Family,

The next step in the Interim Pastor Subcommittee process is to conduct listening sessions with the congregation facilitated by Rev. Tony Barr and staff. The purpose of the listening sessions is to give members an opportunity to share their feedback, concerns, and opinions of our church strengths and opportunities as a congregation. We are here to learn from each other's perspectives and respect the varied opinions we may hear and we invite everyone to respect the process.

There are two ways for you to participate and share your opinions.

1. In-person meeting in the sanctuary (via registration). Registration information will be available on February 16, 2022 and will be communicated via FBC Robocall and email.
2. Participate via Zoom meeting and interact through the chat capability to ask questions. *Zoom meetings will not be recorded and we invite us to respect the process with confidentiality.*

We encourage your prayers and your participation.

Listening session working agreements:

What are working agreements?

Working agreements are behaviors that allow us to invite an environment for self-disclosure, sharing, and learning. This is a fluid list and we welcome your input.

Working Agreements:

- Actively listen to each other respectfully and suspend judgment.
- While others are speaking, listen carefully and notice are you preparing your response or seeking to understand.
- Be curious and open to understanding how others are feeling.
- Resist talking over people.
- Use "I" statements. Personalize and own your perspective and opinion. Speak authentically from your personal experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.

- Be aware of your judgment and put it to the side while you listen. Setting judgment aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated.
- Notice your body language and facial expressions.
- Do not attack or insult others for how they feel or think. Their opinions and feelings are worthy of being shared and acknowledged.
- Do your best to keep your comments concise and relevant to the conversation. Be conscious of sharing airtime with other participants.
- Look for areas of agreement or shared values that may arise and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.
- If there is disagreement, actively listen for ways you can agree with the person speaking.

Sample Listening Session Questions

- From your experience, please share the strengths of First Baptist Church. These might be things that make you proud to be a member of the church.
- From your experience, please share the opportunities of First Baptist Church. These might be blind spots of the church, missed opportunities, ministry changes, and/or membership changes.
- What changes would you like to see after we complete the process of the listening sessions?
- What qualities are important to you for the Interim Pastor of First Baptist Church?
- When we are ready to call a Senior Pastor, what qualities are important that we need to consider?
- Before we begin searching for a Senior Pastor, what changes do we need to make in order to prepare ourselves to receive God's best for us?