
Introducing Jason Read

A LETTER FROM THE ELDERS OF HERITAGE BIBLE CHURCH

Beloved of God,

Our church has been blessed with godly Bible-led leaders for over four decades—men who guard the good deposit that has been entrusted to them. We are thankful for the church Christ has built and excited for our future together! Friends, we are entering a pivotal season of leadership transition as Sandy McCormick retires from his staff role and a new man joins our team. Our purpose in writing this letter is to inform you on how we came to commend Jason Read for this role and instruct you on your vital role in the process of making an elder.

The Role of the Executive Pastor

What does the Executive Pastor do, exactly? The Executive Pastor is a crucial role for our church, serving as the hub for many aspects of our ministry operations. This role works closely with Trent as Pastor for Preaching and Teaching, empowering the staff, coordinating finances and facilities, thereby energizing our Word ministry. It requires a special God-given blend of teaching, coaching, administration and wisdom. You can find the detailed job description on our website for more information.

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The Process to This Point

How did we get here? Sandy McCormick has served our church well for decades in various roles and has served as executive pastor for the last five years. He was wise to plan for his retirement and gracious to give us plenty of notice. He has continued to serve in this role and be an integral part of our search team as we planned for transition. If you know Sandy, you know he is gift to our church, selflessly exhibiting his gift of mercy and encouragement to all he meets. We pray that he still has a lot of fruitful years of ministry in a lay elder capacity.

In early 2019, Sandy began conversations with the elders about his desire to retire from his staff elder position in the next two years. This prompted us to review and revise the Executive Pastor job description. Our desire as a team has not been to find another Sandy, but to design the role that our church needs now and find a new man to fit that role. In March 2020, at the direction and under the oversight of the full elder team, a smaller team of eight elders and one member began to patiently and prayerfully search for the right man for this role. We are grateful for the work of Barry Formanack, Kevin Johnson, Steve Hall, Dan Rundle, Trent Hunter, Lee Hendsbee, Sandy McCormick, and Bryan Keener who invested many evenings and weekends over the Spring and Summer in diligent prayer and work to identify our candidate.

We spread the word of this opening far and wide. We received over 80 applicants, and a team of 8 of us worked over the summer to narrow the field. We had 13 men complete a detailed 58 question questionnaire resulting in 225 pages. We engaged in interviews with 6, then narrowed it to 4 for additional rounds of interviews. After further narrowing our focus, we conducted thorough reference checks and a host of one-off conversations and emails about a variety of topics. All of this was done following what we believe to be, humanly speaking, a clear and fair process. More importantly, it was ensconced in prayer.

Two weekends ago, Jason and Deb Read spent the weekend here with us. This included interviews with our full elder team, as well as engagement with some of our wives and staff. This stage also included discussion of and reflection on our

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interactions with Jason. For important due diligence, we conducted a formal background and credit check. Jason also took time reading our Confession of Faith and Constitution and affirms both whole-heartedly. We take our Biblical role of evaluating future elders on your behalf very seriously. We seek to gauge whether a man meets the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and consider his fit within our team.

We are glad to share that our entire team (14 elders) have joyfully and unanimously voted to nominate Jason Read as our next Executive Pastor.

Meet Jason

Who is Jason Read and why do we think he is the right man for the job? First of all, you need to know that we consider Jason to be a Biblically qualified elder with all of the gifts and experience needed to fulfill this role for our church. Through our engagements with Jason we've described him as level headed, warm hearted, and a lover of Christ's church and people. Jason has almost 15 years of ministry experience, spending the last 10 years at Sojourn Church in Louisville, KY until the ministry needed to make significant budget cuts at the beginning of Covid-19 in April. He has served as Pastor of Care and Next Steps, Director of HR and Administration, and as a Pastoral Assistant.

He holds a Master of Divinity from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and an undergraduate degree from Purdue University.

He and Deb have been married for over 12 years. She grew up nearby in Spartanburg, SC. In fact, Jason lived in Greenville for a few years when he worked at Upward Ministries. He met Deb at work. They have 4 kids ages 7 years to 8 months. He's a Michigan football fan who has already discovered that Heritage has a lot of people with Ohio roots.

We are glad to report that he meets or exceeds all the skills and experience required of this role. He has already successfully performed all the major tenets required of this role, and he has done them in a much larger, more complex min-

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istry than Heritage. Sojourn shares our core theological commitments as a church. In years past Sojourn was a multi-site ministry, though with local elders and local preaching. More recently they have made each of their locations autonomous local churches, a move Jason was a part of leading.

This has been a behind the scenes process for the last number of months. But we are eager to bring you in, for it to become public and personal. So is Jason. Which is why he will be spending time with us over two Sundays.

Our Role as Members

In the Scriptures we see that appointments like this involve leadership (Tit. 1:5). Paul told Titus to appoint elders in Crete. Paul himself traveled to appoint elders in the churches he planted (Acts 14:23). But we also see a pattern of congregational involvement and affirmation in the appointment of men to such lofty tasks as this. We want to say that it seemed good to us and to the church and to the Holy Spirit for Jason to join us (Acts 15:28).

Jason and Deb will be with us live and in person next week. He'll also meet with Deacons and Shepherding Group leaders. Two Sundays from now, he'll preach the Word in the morning worship service and we'll hold a Q&A for our members that afternoon. Then, we'll vote together, two weeks later, on October 4.

In the meantime, we are asking you do to the following:

- Pray for the Spirit to guide our church as we examine Jason for this role
- Watch the video of our announcement
- Read the job description
- Come hear Jason preach on Sunday morning September 20th
- Bring your questions to the Q&A on Sunday at 4:30 p.m. September 20th
- Seek out an elder with any questions you have. Then, on October 4 we'll vote as members on Jason Read as our Executive Pastor.

Thank you for being a joy to lead and discharging your congregational duties well.

Yours in Christ,
The Elders of Heritage Bible Church