

Top Questions:

1. Why now after being off on sabbatical?

Pastor Charles shared some of his learnings after being on His sabbatical. This year he turns 68. And in the last year he has had cancer surgery and had a heart blip. When he came almost 9 years ago, he shared with the board that he felt like he had another 10 plus or minus years to lead WP at his best. Regular reminders with jars of marbles representing his time at West Park have kept pastoral transition in the minds of the congregation and the board. With these things as the backdrop, he feels like this is a good time to slow down and retire from full time ministry.

2. Why leave in March, why not wait until closer to the end of the ministry year?

For various reasons, Pastor Charles feels like this is a good time for the church and for his family. The church will celebrate Easter together the following Sunday, which is one of our biggest outreaches of the year. The Spring time is a good season for a transition like this in preparation for the summer and a busy and exciting fall ministry year ahead.

3. What is the process for searching for a new pastor?

West Park's governance structure is such that the congregation elects Elders to give oversight to the church. One of these responsibilities is the discernment and calling of a new lead pastor. The process has already begun, and the board has taken the following actions: They have sought outside counsel, studied best practices, and taken a retreat to discern the vision of what a new lead pastor "looks like." The board is designing an excellent process to find a successor and to keep the church informed as well. We have hired a consultant to help us navigate through this process. We will continue consultations to determine West Park's "DNA." We will continue to develop the "Non-Negotiables" for a new Lead Pastor. If there is an interim period, staff will continue to preach and lead under the direction of the Board. If a longer interim period is expected, we may consider an Interim Pastor.

4. What are Pastor Charles' plans after WestPark?

Pastor Charles and Sherryl will retire to Laurel, Mississippi, where Sherryl grew up and where her sister currently lives. Living close to her will allow them to help her in her later years. Tiffany will be staying in London. Charles will not be quitting ministry, only retiring from a Lead Pastor role. He plans to coach leaders and consult in both the church and the business world, write more, do some fill-in preaching, and hopefully be an adjunct professor teaching in some seminaries as he finishes his PhD in a few months.

5. What effects will this have on ministries? (What are the predicted effects on language ministries)?

Ministries and language ministries will continue on as usual. We are so thankful for the healthy and vibrant ministries that we have here at WestPark and each ministry and language ministry contribute to the health of the church. We want to see these ministries continue and not "skip a beat" through this season as a church.

6. Are any other staff leaving?

It is the desire and goal of the board of Elders to keep the current staff after Charles' retirement. Each staff person is positioned well to lead their various ministries with excellence. We are so thankful for our staff, and we want to continue to foster an environment where they can thrive in ministry. We are well positioned with our current executive and associate pastors and other staff, evidenced by Charles' time on sabbatical. We have a strong unified team with demonstrated preaching and administrative skills.

7. Who will the lead pastor be?

We (Charles, Staff, Board) ask you to pray with us as we continue the process of discerning the next season, specifically the next lead pastor for West Park. Pray specifically that God will provide, in his perfect timing someone who:

Has the heart of a Pastor

Is spiritually mature

Fulfils the qualifications of an Elder found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1

Has spiritual Gifts that meet the needs of the position

Shares in the vision of ministry set forth by the Elders Board

Has core values in alignment with our statement of faith

Will be aligned with the unique culture of West Park - a diverse local body with multiple ethnicities, cultures, languages, generations, and congregations represented.

8. Who will be preaching?

The preaching responsibilities will be carried out by our executive pastors: Corey, Neil, and Kevin. They did a great job teaching through Pastor Charles' sabbatical, and they will continue teaching through our series on the book of Mark.

9. How will the congregation be involved in the process of finding a new pastor?

West Park's governance structure is such that the congregation elects Elders to give oversight to the church. One of these responsibilities is the discernment and calling of a new lead pastor. The congregation can be involved in the following ways:

Prayer - we encourage the congregation to pray that God would lead us in the right direction as we choose a new lead pastor.

Updates - the board of Elders is committed to give ongoing updates to the congregation on any progress that is made and next steps that we are taking.

Encourage - we are a church family, and we need to encourage each other through this season of finding a new lead pastor.

Serve - as we are going through this process of finding a new lead pastor, we want to be heavily involved in doing the work of the church that God has called us to. Please stay involved and serve and we will continue to see God at work in and through your lives.

Vote - at some point in this process, there will be a vote on the new lead pastor. Only those who are members of West Park church will be eligible to vote.

10. Who do we give Cheetos to when Charles leaves?

Ha ha - what will we do with all those cheetoos :) We are looking forward to celebrating and honouring the Stones for 10 years at West Park and a lifetime of service in full time ministry. We are quite confident that Cheetoes will be a part of the celebration in some way shape or form!

If you'd like to contact the board, you can at elders@westparkchurch.ca.