

NEW GOSHENHOPPEN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday, April 24, 2022

Donna Fried called the meeting to order following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. She welcomed all in attendance this morning, either in person or on Zoom. She stated the objective of the meeting was the Calling of Rev'd. Dr. David A. Williams as the next settled Senior Pastor at New Goshenhoppen UCC. Donna invited Steve Lentz, Chairperson of the Senior Pastor Search Committee, to open the meeting with prayer.

Following the prayer, Donna stated that clipboards would be circulated for those in attendance to write down their names. A ballot for voting will also be distributed for use later in the meeting. Those persons participating by Zoom will have the opportunity to vote when directed by Consistory President, Will Howe who is handling the technological aspects of this morning's Zoom meeting. Donna encouraged visitors to stay for the meeting; however, reminded them that only New Goshenhoppen members may participate in the voting.

Steve Lentz introduced Mr. Paul Hightower, Ursinus Association representative. Mr. Hightower brought greetings from the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference and the Ursinus Association. He shared that it was a pleasure to work with Steve on the Committee on Ministry. Paul stated that his responsibility today was to count the ballots and to certify the election. He noted that this was an important time in the life of this church and the community.

Steve Lentz then provided an overview of the candidate, Rev'd. Dr. David A. Williams. The committee received Rev'd. Williams' profile on December 23, 2021. Pastor Dave (as the committee refers to him) and the Search Committee have had the opportunity to get well acquainted over the past four months. They had two interviews with him---one virtual and one in person. They have also spoken with him on several other occasions to answer additional questions along the interview process. The committee has contacted his references (a former confirmation teacher, an administrative secretary, and a pastoral colleague) and all have spoken very highly of him.

Steve commented briefly on Pastor Dave's background: He was raised in Akron, Ohio and is the oldest of three sons of Mary and the late Robert Williams. He attended University of Akron majoring in music (organ and vocal). He later attended Fort Wayne Bible College, earning a degree in Pastoral Ministries and Church Music. He then completed his Master of Arts/Master of Divinity degree at Ashland Theological Seminary and was awarded his Doctorate of Divinity while still pursuing additional doctorate work in worship and homiletics (art of preaching and writing sermons).

Pastor Dave is presently in a shared ministry with Trinity United Church of Christ and Zion Lutheran churches in Somerset County, Pennsylvania (about 70 miles southeast of Pittsburgh).

It is noted that the committee reviewed several profiles and all were qualified pastors; however, there were certain character and qualification highlights that became a unique fit as pastor for New

Goshenhoppen. Some areas that stood out to the committee were: Experience with the Committee on Ministry; consulting and strategic planning; pastoral care/counseling; spiritual direction; music; administrative leadership and liturgical development. Among the many areas of focus in our profile, we would often turn to the leadership expectations that YOU, the congregation, in collaboration with our committee, helped to shape. Basically, it is what YOU, the congregation, expect in a pastor.

The Senior Pastor Search Committee spent six months updating the 2017 church profile. Pastor Dave seems to meet all the criteria that the committee/the congregation were searching for.

Faith was at the core.

Preaching: The committee members had numerous opportunities to listen to Live Stream Services that Pastor Dave led. His ministry style is a blend of Reformed (Christ is externally one person with divine and human nature) and Wesleyan (One God who is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Savior of all persons who put their faith in Him alone for eternal life) theologies. He speaks clearly and is able to connect the scriptural text to the sermon. He relates personal stories and is engaging and friendly. His approach is very dynamic and animated.

Pastoral Care: In Pastor Dave's present churches, the hospital visits usually involve a 140-mile round trip drive to the two major hospitals in Pittsburgh. Home care visits are important, especially pre and post hospital care, along with home communions. He described pastoral care as a critical need.

Worship: Pastor Dave is comfortable and confident in leading worship. He demonstrates experience. During the pandemic his organist left the church. Pastor Dave carried the dual role of organist and worship leader, whether playing live during the service or using his own pre-recorded organ music. If you have the opportunity to listen to his services, you'll note his wonderful singing voice. He also plays in the Bell Choir.

Leadership: Pastor Dave has the ability to relate to staff as well as has experience with church finances and budgets. He serves at the conference level on Finance and Budget planning. He has served in a multi-staff, larger church congregation. "Trust" was a word that was expressed by his references.

Youth: Pastor Dave currently teaches Confirmation Class. He is very comfortable engaging with youth. He has a love for the Heidelberg Catechism and uses it in his confirmation teaching. He has commented that he would like to be present and involved with our nursery school---perhaps reading a book to the class.

Community: He is presently involved in the Lion's Club—he cooks meals for them. He would like to participate in the Upper Perkiomen Ministerium and to be visible in the community. He is supportive and encouraging of mission work, although admits that he's not handy with power tools.

Another pastoral quality that we found positive was that he puts an emphasis on self-care; he uses vacation time for continuing education, self-reflection, and spiritual direction opportunities. To balance his ministry, he has personal connections with colleagues and life-long friends that keep him grounded. His mother, Mary, is an active person who resides in Ohio. She was a former church administrative secretary. She plans to drive east for a visit when appropriate. Pastor Dave views New Goshenhoppen as a great opportunity to use his gifts to enhance our congregation. He stated, "He's a coach, a quarterback, and a player on the field!"

Steve Lentz noted that the Property Committee and other volunteers have done a fantastic job in preparing the parsonage for a new pastor. The parsonage has received some major renovation: new flooring, freshly painted walls; new bathroom showers, toilets, vanities; new landscaping, etc. Thank you for all your hard work!

Steve welcomed Delores Schuler and Kelly Alderfer to come forward to provide a few comments. Delores shared that she looked at the candidate's skill set. Pastoral care and spiritual direction were high on her list of qualifications! Visiting is definitely a priority. Pastor Dave has been known to stay with families in comfort and prayer during their times of need. He prioritizes home visits and communions. He has seen New Goshenhoppen's shut-in list and he understands our expectations. Delores shared that she likes to hear the scriptures and have them correlate to the rest of the worship service. After listening to Pastor Dave preach and interviewing with him on several occasions, she got a "warm and fuzzy" feeling about him.

Kelly Alderfer said that she has listened to several of Pastor Dave's live stream services. She felt that during worship he makes Jesus come alive! She feels that this "excitement" is what this congregation and church need. She favorably supports his Calling.

Steve Lentz stated that this process is still in a confidentiality stage. He asked the congregation to refrain from sharing any information about his candidacy with others, at least for the time being. He advised the congregation to be very careful, especially when sharing on Social Media. If voted in today, Pastor Dave would need some time to inform his congregation of this new Calling.

Steve read a letter from Edith Roeder to the Search Committee. Edith is going to be 102 years old this fall. She stated how wonderful it was to receive 11 profiles to review (actually it was 12). She hoped the new pastor would find pleasure in this position. She said she'd like to greet him at the door; however, she feels she is too old to attend in person. She feels that New Goshenhoppen and this congregation will bring him great pleasure.

Tom Bancroft shared that he observed Pastor Dave preaching over the past four months. He was impressed with him after his first view. His sermons often bring him to tears---as it did again this morning. This overwhelming feeling has never happened to him before; Pastor Dave has a way of bringing out this emotion in him. Tom said he hopes to be able to hear his sermons for many years to come.

Steve Lentz then thanked the Senior Pastor Search Committee for their service. This was a very special, dedicated group of individuals that really came together to get a job done. They did a tremendous amount of work and never complained about doing the extra legwork that may have been necessary. Please show your thanks to: Kelly Alderfer, Doug Atno (secretary), Thomas Bancroft, Donna Fried, Will Howe, Emily Moyer, Delores Schuler, Nonna Stankunas, and Shannon Viola.

Rev. Royer was also very helpful with profile development. Once that task was completed, he recused himself from the meetings. Thank you also to Consistory, the Finance Committee, the Church Staff and volunteers that helped with the preparations for the candidate weekend events. We had lots of volunteer help throughout the candidate weekend, both at the Spaghetti Supper and the breakfast this morning.

Steve asked the congregation if they had any questions or concerns prior to voting. No questions were heard. Donna Fried stated there was a quorum at the meeting so that a vote could take place. Steve Lentz said on behalf of the Senior Pastor Search Committee we are making the motion to approve the Call of Rev. Dr. David Williams as our church's next settled Senior Pastor. There was no need for a second to the motion. The votes were cast and while the ballots were collected and tallied, Donna Fried and Pastor Elaine Ely led the congregation in singing some camp songs.

Once the ballots were tallied, Will Howe announced the results: With pleasure he reported that 145 members voted to Call Rev'd. Dr. David Williams as the next Senior Pastor of New Goshenhoppen UCC. There were 2 abstentions and 0 "no" votes.

Will Howe asked Rev. Dr. David Williams if he would accept the Call. He responded, "I joyfully accept this responsibility!"

Rev. Williams said that he will begin his ministry at New Goshenhoppen on July 1, 2022. He will inform the Consistory at his current church tomorrow evening and the Lutheran Church Council president. He asked the congregation to respectfully refrain from sharing the good news of his Calling until after Tuesday evening in order to allow him time to inform his current church leadership.

A motion was made by Tom Bancroft, second by Kim Jacobs, to adjourn the meeting. Pastor Dave provided a benediction: "Go in peace and serve the Lord." Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Biehn
Administrative Secretary
New Goshenhoppen United Church of Christ