



3031 Monticello Boulevard

Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

www.fhcpresb.org

Part One: TRANSITIONAL PASTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

WHO WE ARE

Forest Hill Church (FHC), Presbyterian, is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Presbytery of the Western Reserve (PWR) in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Our mission is to discover God's call, celebrate the Spirit's presence, and be witness to Christ's transformative power. Known for our progressive commitment to social equity and inclusiveness, we embrace our role as a Beloved Community, modeled on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. As a PC (USA) Matthew 25 Church, we focus on building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.

Our 121-year-old congregation has had only three pastors since 1946, with our current Pastor/Head of Staff set to retire in August 2024. Our 365 adult members are highly educated and drawn from a wide variety of Christian denominations. Although membership is majority white (86%), FHC has the second largest proportion of persons of color among congregations in the PWR. Age distribution of members is older than the typical Presbyterian congregation, but there are 34 young families and 61 children and youth. An average Sunday features worship attendance of ~150 members in person and on livestream.

Our church offers many opportunities to enable inward spiritual growth for our congregation. We are accustomed to dynamic preaching that applies Scripture to an understanding of God's intentions for our world today. FHC's music program, led by its Music Director/Organist, strives for cultural diversity. We have a growing Families, Youth and Children ministry, led by a Director; and a lay-led adult spiritual growth program that has nourished our faith but was adversely affected by COVID. Additionally, behind stellar pitching, we are also perennial champions of the Heights Church Softball league.

Though built on land with a racially-restricted deed, our church has moved counter to this history in a restorative journey, reflected in the following outwardly-focused ministries:

- A Sanctuary Church - Housed people in the church who faced immigration-related issues
- Racial Equity Buddies & Book Club – Workgroups and partnerships designed to discuss and combat racism
- Food Pantry - 4th largest food pantry in Ohio, partnering with the Cleveland Food Bank
- Alcoholics Anonymous - One of AA's oldest continuously meeting groups
- Immigration Task Force - Educates the FHC congregation and works with various immigration interest groups

- Greater Cleveland Congregations - Faith-based, non-partisan organization that builds power for social justice
- A More Light Congregation - Welcoming and supporting the LGBTQIA+ community's full participation in church and society
- Racial Repair and Reconciliation Initiative - FHC initiatives to help make amends (e.g. financial scholarship) for past racial sins
- Presbyterian Earth Care Program - Stewarding God's creation for the future

Our congregation has several emerging challenges that we seek to address during the transition:

- Our recent experience with an intentionally biracial Co-Pastor model indicates that we need help with our inward racial equity journey, both individually and collectively.
- Given that current lay leadership is stretched across multiple ministries, we need to refocus and encourage new involvement in church leadership.
- We want to revitalize our flock post-COVID, particularly by attracting and incorporating more young families, and creating more small group opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships with each other.
- We have an ongoing need for enhanced spiritual nourishment, especially at this time.

Late last year, Session engaged Holy Cow! Consulting group to conduct a congregational assessment survey to help FHC reflect on its present and future course of ministry and mission. We anticipate that the results of this survey will inform the work of our Mission Study Committee during the upcoming transition period. Also, Session has developed the following vision statement using the findings of the Holy Cow! survey:

By 2027, Session will courageously embrace the transition by being: spiritually led, more diverse, fully prepared to serve, living into individual gifts, connecting with and across ministries, communicating openly and effectively with congregants as a Matthew 25 Church and Beloved Community.

Part Two: TRANSITIONAL PASTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Purpose: The Transitional Pastor will guide, support, and nurture the congregation as we discern the church's pastoral leadership model, then call a new installed Pastor(s)/Head(s) of Staff accordingly. The Transitional Pastor shall not be eligible to be considered as a candidate for an installed position.

Accountability: The Transitional Pastor will be accountable to the Session of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian through its Personnel Committee and to the Presbytery of the Western Reserve through its Committee on Ministry.

Availability: Full-time position beginning September/October 2024 for a period of 12 months, with performance reviews at 6-month intervals; and with possible extension as needed, subject to mutual agreement of the Transitional Pastor, the Session, and the Committee on Ministry.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POSITION

TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In partnership with the pertinent lay-led Session ministries, the Transitional Pastor will:

- Provide spiritual leadership for the congregation in all its activities.
- Plan and lead worship on Sundays and special services; administer the sacraments; perform weddings and memorials.
- Deliver inspired teaching and preaching that uses Scripture and other inspirational writings to help the congregation discern God's intentions for love, justice and inclusion in our world today; share preaching duties with occasional guest clergy/speakers.
- Provide pastoral care, visitation and counseling.
- Moderate Session and work with the Clerk to set agendas; be staff liaison to and support work of Session committees and other entities.
- Assist Nominating Committee in identifying lay leadership; train and nurture newly elected officers.
- Function as Head of Staff; supervise and support program staff (Director of Family, Youth, and Children and Director of Music/Organist) and support staff; convene weekly staff meetings; work with Personnel Committee and Session on staff issues.
- Promote and support church growth efforts (e.g., classes for new members and seekers/questioners).
- Ensure faithful use of the church's financial resources by working with the Stewardship Ministry, Co-Treasurers, Finance Committee, Endowment Committee, and Staff Bookkeeper.
- Participate in the life and work of the Presbytery and support the church's engagement with the secular community.
- Adhere to the policies of Forest Hill Church.

TRANSITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In adhering to the expectations of our Presbytery, the Transitional Pastor will also:

- Assist and support FHC Session, the Mission Study Committee, and the Pastoral Search Committee to help the congregation celebrate the church's past, assess its present situation and the needs of its communities, and chart its future in Gospel ministry within and outside the walls.
- Work in a collegial relationship with the PWR Committee on Ministry to enable the congregation to discover its identity (Who are we? Who are our neighbors? What is God calling us to do? What is our Mission?).
- Help recruit, train and support present and new leaders.
- Nurture the congregation's relationship with the Presbytery.
- Aid the congregation in its preparations for a new installed Pastor(s) and our future mission and ministry.

With regard to the particular needs of Forest Hill Church, the Transitional Pastor will:

- Assist Session, its committees/ministries in helping us maintain cohesiveness and love for each other as we grapple with difficult issues regarding racial equity, social justice, and a fraught national political climate that has and will continue to stir tensions within the congregation; Use conflict management/resolution skills and sound theology to show that what unites us is stronger than what would divide us (see Romans 8); thereby preparing the ground for the new installed Pastor(s) to lead us with fresh energy and renewed commitment to the way of Jesus Christ.
- Assist Session, and other lay and staff leaders, to acknowledge that while we have done much together, we are stretched thin and showing signs of weariness on the journey and need help coming to terms with the realities of limits to our numbers, time, energy, and (even) money. Helping us focus on our true priorities will aid the new installed Pastor(s) in finding the resources we need for renewed ministry (see II Cor. 4).
- Assist Session and professional staff to overcome lingering effects of COVID on the vitality of our life together in Christian community, and help us lay a foundation to resume its growth, particularly by expanding small group fellowship opportunities, and by attracting and incorporating more young families with children (see I John 3).
- Assist the entire FHC congregation in deepening our Christian spirituality, via instruction in adult/youth/children's faith formation and in other small groups (see Acts 1) to better experience and enjoy the glory of God.

GIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ONE WE ARE SEEKING

- A mature practitioner of the Christian faith who lives into the teachings of Jesus, possesses sound theological grounding for ministry, and is able to provide spiritual leadership in transition to and with other staff and members of our congregation.
- A full-time clergy person ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament by the PC (USA) or another denomination with which we are in full communion, with training and/or experience in Interim/Transitional ministry preferred.
- A person who embodies warmth and humility, has a good sense of humor and is comfortable with a degree of spontaneity during worship.
- Experience leading racially and culturally diverse congregations/organizations.
- Training and experience in conflict management/conflict resolution/consensus building methodologies appropriate to church settings.
- Demonstrated evidence of strong staff management and financial skills; experience administering a large, multi-staff church preferred.
- Preserve one continuous 24-hour period of personal Sabbath rest per week.

INTERESTED CANDIDATES SHOULD PROVIDE:

- Resume of experience (PDP/PIF if available)
- Statement of faith
- Preferred contact information

AND APPLY TO:

Adam Majot, Co-Chair of Transitional Pastor Search Committee

Email: transitionalpastor2024@fhcpresb.org **Phone:** (304) 692-9220