

The Pulpit Committee has spent many hours interviewing and talking with Dr. Monty Stallins throughout our discernment process. Below are a few of the answers that we feel address any questions brought up to us by the congregation that have not been specifically answered in our Introductory Presentation posted on Calvary's Website at 6pm on June 24th. If you have any additional questions please reach out to us through our email cbclex.pulpit@gmail.com and we would be happy to discuss!

What do you believe about the role of the Senior Pastor in the church?

The most important thing a pastor does is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. To love God and our neighbors in order to discern on a daily basis what that discipleship looks like. If I do what Christ is leading me to do, then I believe I will be an effective pastor, in the place I need to be, doing the things I need to do, in the spirit those need to be done.

There are certain expectations within that role. The most important is to love the Church and the people in that church. That is where it all starts. There is an old saying "They don't care what you know until they know that you care." Whether I am personally doing these tasks or responsible for overseeing them; teaching, preaching, leading and administrative services all come out of a deep pastoral care for the congregation.

Furthermore, I am a firm believer in the Baptist principles, including the Priesthood of all believers, and a big proponent of church polity which confirm that the role of the pastor is to lead from within under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, the pastor should be a facilitator of discernment for the congregation. Launching others into ministry, helping others discover their passions, teaching them how to do the work that God is calling them to do, encouraging and equipping others in their walk of faith are all responsibilities that fall in that category. The pastor should act as chief encourager of the Church for those doing things behind the scenes and those launching new ideas and ministries.

Tell us why you have reached the point you are ready to talk with us today?

It comes down to trying to be open to where God might be leading. I am currently in a healthy and happy church where the congregation loves each other and participates in significant ministries. I have been at 2nd Avenue 17 years and enjoy the community we live in. I am not looking to leave but I am interested in where God might be leading me next and am mindful that if I want to have another significant ministry somewhere else, I need to be open. I hope to be able to serve another long term, 15+ year, ministry. I have known of Calvary and its ministry for a long time having grown up in Western KY and see a lot of urban ministry opportunities in Lexington that I like. Having had experience in that at Wieuca Road Baptist in the past, those opportunities intrigue me. I am simply exploring what God has planned for me.

We have an 8:30 contemporary style and 11am more traditional style services. Do you have experience in both styles of worship?

For the last three years we have had a 5pm contemporary service for college students and young adults with a completely different sermon from the Sunday morning worship content. My traditional service uses video screens and video clips as a hybrid service. This traditional service also has a sanctuary choir in which Laura enjoys participating. I am comfortable preparing sermons for whatever worship style Calvary needs.

How do you go about managing administrative, organizational and financial duties for a church the size of Calvary?

At Wieuca Baptist Church in Atlanta we had about 1,000 on Sunday mornings and I joined as the 10th member of the staff. I have experience with your current situation and worked in that environment there. Currently I have 5 staff members, 3 of which are part time (which I have often thought can take as much time to manage as full-time staff). I look forward to new opportunities to collaborate with a full-time staff that works together daily. The systems and functions themselves are largely the same as 2nd Ave but will just need to be scaled up a little at Calvary. I do have a business background and consider that a strength. I am very comfortable with the finance and accounting aspect of church administration.

How do you draw in and connect with young families and young adults in a downtown church?

Most of our young families did not come to us through a targeted program. They came because they want to be a part of an intergenerational family of faith that worships together and serves together. They stay because they want the care and opportunities we offer their children and value the relationships they have established.

We keep trying to reach additional folks of all ages. We are continuing to try new ideas to reach families. We are beginning a new Bible study in May for about 10 of our couples who come to worship but are not engaged in Sunday School. We are also about to roll out a new surrogate grandparent network that connects our families with young children to grandparents within the church, who have agreed to help with weekday meals, childcare for date nights and sick days and other ways of support. We are hopeful that this will help our families connect more to the congregation at large and let other families in the community know that we surround families with care and support. (Neither of these have started yet due to Covid-19.)

I have served in a couple of destination churches. I think people will drive in to a church they think is vibrant and loves them. To drive by lots of other churches, the members must feel like they are part of something special and want to be a part of that community. People will attend where they feel like they belong and have something to contribute. They also need to see that what they do, as a part of God's kingdom work, is clear and visible to them. We now know that the well-intentioned gimmicks, specialty programs and events do not work over time. Real community, real ministry, real mission is what works over time.

What is your position on gay marriage as it pertains to church doctrine/Scripture in general and Calvary in particular and how do you plan to address this issue to maintain church unity?

I believe that the church must discern how it will bless and affirm marriage. The authority of the pastor to officiate a wedding is rooted in the authority of the congregation. The specific question concerning same sex marriage should be approached as a part of a broader conversation about human sexuality. This conversation must be careful, intentional, honest and graceful. It will be an exercise in listening deeply to one another, to Scripture and to the voice of the Spirit. I would not undertake this conversation until I felt established in the congregation.

My personal considerations then are secondary at this point. With that said, I do want to clarify that my present position is rooted first in the position of Second Avenue Baptist Church. Additionally, I have not been approached about officiating a same sex wedding. So my response at this point is

speculative. I cannot say at this moment how I would answer if I served a church that would affirm such a union. I am in process on this question personally. Perhaps we can walk this path together and, by the grace of God, arrive at the same destination.

What does your 1st year look like?

Tell those in the congregation who are anxious about change that **I** won't do anything...**we**, the church, will decide how to move forward.

All change begins with "asking what is God leading us to do?". A pastor's job is to facilitate congregational discernment in partnership with staff, deacons and leadership and helping the congregation cast a vision for the future.

Goals for year 1:

- Establishing a relationship with the congregation. I expect it to take a while for people to see me as the pastor and will work to earn that title/respect
- Listening to the heart of Calvary
- Attending to those with immediate needs – homebound, nursing home, ill, etc.
- Understanding what Calvary looks like in the community
- Attending to staff to determine how they are called
- Structuring and building those staff relationships

What is your doctrinal position on:

Inspiration of Scripture

All Scripture is the inspired (God-breathed) Word of God. It is the story of God's love for us that begins in creation and culminates in new creation with the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at its center. The Bible is useful for teaching, correcting, and training in righteousness. It is infallible in its purpose to reveal God's plan of salvation for humankind and the restoration of all creation. The Written Word of Scripture is to be interpreted through the criterion of the Living Word of Jesus Christ with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

(2 Timothy 3:16, John 16:13, Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Peter 1:19-21)

Biblical Authority

As the inspired Word of God, the Bible provides the standard by which all human conduct, systems of belief, practice and doctrine are measured. The Bible is the ultimate authority for the Church as interpreted through the Living Word of Jesus Christ with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. (Psalm 19:7-10, 119:11; Proverbs 3:1-6)