

Sometimes we think replacing pastors should be like replacing coaches, that we should just go out and immediately get another person. In December of 2002, the head football coach at East Carolina University stepped down from his position. Thirteen days later a press conference was held to announce the next head coach. When my husband went to serve as senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church, one block over from the ECU football stadium, that new coach was starting his first season. He lasted two seasons. By the time my husband retired from his position 14 1/2 years later, the university had hired four different head coaches and spent several hundreds of thousands of dollars on buyouts, trying to find the right coach.

This congregation has a history of strong pastorates. Your Pastor Nominating Committee is approaching their task diligently and prayerfully with a commitment to find God's person for your next chapter in ministry and mission. This important work cannot be done in a hurry. Please lift prayers of support for your PNC and for their families.

With appreciation for their work, I share the following report on candidates considered:

Adam: Good man, but wife Eve has a history of temptation with fruit. Also one reference told of how his wife and he enjoy walking nude in the woods.

Methuselah: Too old, WAY too old!

Noah: Former pastorate of 120 years with no converts. Prone to unrealistic building projects.

Abraham: A man of deep faith, but has a habit of breaking into tears or laughter at odd times.

Joseph: A big thinker, but a braggart, believes in dream-interpreting, and has a prison record.

Moses: A modest and meek man, but poor communicator, even stuttering at times. Sometimes blows his stack and acts rashly. Some say he left an earlier position over a murder charge.

David: The most promising leader of all, until we discovered the incident with his neighbor's wife.

Solomon: Great preacher, but housing needs too great to accommodate so many wives.

Elijah: Prone to despair and melancholy; collapses under pressure.

Elisha: Reported to have lived with a single widow while at his former church.

Hosea: A tender and loving pastor but our people could never handle his wife's occupation.

Deborah: Strong leader and seems to be anointed, but she is female.

Jeremiah: Emotionally unstable, alarmist, negative, always lamenting things, and reported to have taken a long trip to bury his underwear on the bank of a foreign river.

Isaiah: On the fringe? Claims to have seen angels in church.

Jonah: Refused God's call into ministry until he was forced to obey by getting swallowed up by a great fish. He told us the fish later spit him out on the shore near here. We hung up.

Amos: Too backward and unpolished. With some seminary training he might have promise, but has issues with people of means. Might fit in better in a poorer congregation.

John: Reported to be a Baptist. Has slept in the outdoors for months on end, has a weird diet, and provokes denominational leaders.

James and John: Package deal preacher and associate seemed good at first, but found out they have an ego problem regarding fellow workers and seating positions.

Peter: Has a bad temper, even has been known to curse. Had a big run-in with Paul in Antioch.

Can be a loose cannon.

Paul: Powerful CEO-type leader and fascinating preacher. However, short on tact, unforgiving with younger ministers, and has been known to preach all night.

Timothy: Too young.

Jesus: Has had popular times, but once when his church grew to 5000 he managed to offend them all and the church dwindled down to twelve people. Seldom stays in one place very long. And, of course, he's single.

Judas: His references are solid. A steady plodder. Good connections. Knows how to handle money. We may go to hear him preach this Sunday. Possibilities here.

With thanks and prayers for our hard-working PNC,

Wanda Neely, Interim Pastor