**** January, 2022

To the Governing Board or Oversight Council at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Church:

The following is an overview for your consideration to engage Vital Church Ministry to come alongside your church and ***walk with you*** through this season of transition. The key is we walk with you … we are pastors—not consultants—who have been called to the mission of leading churches into biblical vitality. For over 25 years, we have worked with churches to help them move to a place of readiness to call a new lead pastor. We do this through a proven theologically driven process.

We look at leadership transition as a season of opportunity for your church to take a fresh look at how to build on your unique God-given strengths and to address those areas that need upgrading or modifying prior to calling your next lead pastor.

Our work begins with a simple but important question: What is the Spirit saying to your church? (cf., Rev. 1-3). Then we rely on God’s grace to listen well and do it together!

Our question to church leadership is: “Do you want to get well?” (cf., John 5:6). Jesus asked that very question to a man who lay beside the pool of Siloam. That man, who had been at the pool for many years was now faced with a potential new reality and way of living. Being paralyzed was difficult and challenging, but it was at least familiar. Jesus invited him to embrace a totally new life. A small seed of faith was revealed in his statement, *“Sir, I have no one to help me into the pool.”* Jesus’ response was powerful and authoritative, *“Get up. Pick up your mat and walk.”*

Jesus is the Head of the Church. He is ultimately the healer of all people and every church. Organizational reengineering may help a congregation to run more efficiently, but what is often needed is a fresh encounter with Jesus! By the grace of God, genuine transformation flows from our connection with the person and work of Christ as He in some manner asks us to get up and walk on by faith.

We believe that corporate renewal begins with personal renewal, and the church renewal and revitalization we long for typically begins with leadership. Leaders who are humble and broken before Christ positions a church to be healed and revitalized.

We believe that true revitalization occurs when we are dependent on the Holy Spirit as we prayerfully hear and follow what the Spirit is saying to your church.

In a season of transition, we ask churches to be discerning about these questions:

1. What are the Real Issues?
2. What are God’s Solutions?
3. Who are God’s Leaders?
4. What are God’s Plans?

**Phase 1 – Discern**

Up front or early in the interim pastor ministry we conduct a church wide assessment that helps us all discern answers the first question – What are the Real Issues? We typically identify between 3 to 5 core issues and sometimes what we call “root” issues.

Then we discern and present recommendations related to each issue, which starts to answer the 2nd question- What are God’s Solutions?

So the church assessment is a “mirror” (reflecting what the people have said) and a “map” (recommendations for the interim season) to bring focus to real issues and God’s solutions. The VCM analysts and pastors come alongside your church to give everyone a voice in this significant transition season. We employ a customized/confidential on-line survey and sometimes do input sessions to not just gather data and information, but to hear what’s on the minds and hearts of your people.

Purpose:

The diagnostic survey provides an accurate understanding of current realities in the church. It is an effective and safe way for people to give input. The on-line survey highlights what people like, are concerned about, and hope for. It helps to reveal church ***Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*** (S.W.O.T.) which then helps us discover key recommendations (the “map”) to focus on and accomplish, by God’s grace.

Please review the sample Executive Summary (attached document) as an example of the core part of a church assessment report.

Benefits:

The church assessment provides invaluable insight into the life of the church, and a framework by which leadership can make well-informed decisions. The assessment recommendations become Interim Pastor ministry objectives in their job description.

Deliverables:

You will receive a full written report that charts and analyzes each question asked in the online survey. In addition, we will provide an Executive Summary that focuses in on the core issues and typically provides recommendations to be implemented for each issue.

**Phase 2 – Implement**

In this phase the Intentional Interim Pastor serves your board and staff, and leads the congregation through a biblical process that starts to answer and implement questions 2-4: What are God’s Solutions? Who are God’s Leaders?; What are God’s Plans?

We typically ask church leaders to collaborate in pursuing these Ministry Outcomes during the transition season: Gospel Values Embedded; Gifted Leaders Empowered; Good Governance Established; Mission, Vision and Values Embraced; and a Discipleship Pathway Engaged. Flowing out of the Discern Phase the intentional interim pastor (IIP) and leadership will prioritize the specific recommendations from your church assessment to be facilitated by the interim pastor. The IIP is also a valuable resource in helping to resource and guide (not lead) the search process of hiring the next senior pastor.

1. Leading as an Intentional Interim Pastor

Vital Church pastors lead through preaching Christ-centered sermons and developing your preaching team. The sermon series are developed to address areas identified in the church assessment. The Interim Pastor also works with current staff who lead the worship team and worship services.

Along with facilitating the church assessment recommendations, the IIP typically focuses on supervising/evaluating staff, equipping leaders, conflict resolution, relational reconciliation, and re-affirming vision/mission/values. The approach is collaborative

and the focus is on what the church needs to prepare to recruit and retain a godly/gifted next senior pastor.

1. Focus on Church Leadership

In order for Vital Church to facilitate change, church leadership and staff must be humble and engaged. The IIP typically invests 80 to 85% of his time with church leaders – equipping and developing the board and staff.

The IIP often recruits and trains a Transition Team to help administrate and facilitate key initiatives and take some load off current staff. The Interim Pastor works with staff and current leaders to identify men and women who have leadership, administrative, and/or strategic gifts to serve on this team. The IIP comes prepared to facilitate staff meetings, participate in board meetings, and develop leadership trainings.

1. Teamwork and Accountability

The IIP is assigned an experienced pastor from the Vital Church team as a coach. This helps with clarifying issues, developing strategies, and moving the interim process forward in a timely manner. Built into the contract the IIP is to receive a written six month evaluation by the board to assess effectiveness related to the church assessment recommendations. This evaluation is provided to both the VCM pastor’s coach and the VCM executive director.

1. Typical Interim Pastor Process

The IIP ministry typically begins in tandem with a church assessment and ends by passing the baton to the next lead pastor.

The Interim Pastor process is designed as much as possible to meet the needs and objectives of the church. We often describe it as “Lecture/Lab” where-by we are not

on-site every week. When not working on-site, the IIP works from their home office on things like sermon prep and preparation of trainings or initiatives to be implemented, and is in regular contact with staff and leaders by phone or video conference. We also learn a lot by observing who steps up and how staff functions when we are not on-site.

If we have a pastor who lives in close proximity to your church, this model can be modified based on needs of the church and leadership capacity resident in the church.

The IIP typically works on-site 12-15 days/month. It’s typical for pastors to front load time on-site at the beginning of the interim pastorate to move things forward, and to be present during special calendar events (e.g., Easter; Advent) or critical church initiatives.

**Phase 3 – Follow Up**

If desired by the leadership team our IIP can coach the new incoming lead pastor for several months upon the new pastor’s arrival. This typically consists of one to two meetings per month and is designed to facilitate an effective lead pastoral transition.

**Fee Structure**

**Phase 1: Discern**

Fees are based on level of assessment activity and church size.

**Phase II: Implement/IIP**

The church hires Vital Church to place a pastor and coach. This fee is based on the former lead pastor compensation package (Salary, Housing and Medical benefits) plus expenses such as travel and housing while on-site. Housing can be donated by a church member.

**Phase III: Follow up (Optional)**

Monthly calls (1-2 a month) between the IIP and your new lead pastor for 3 to 6 months following the new pastor’s arrival is $150 per month.

**Next Steps:**

After your review of this proposal we find it helpful to schedule a conference call with your leadership to discuss this proposal in more detail and answer remaining questions.

Our pastors are called and trained to walk with you through this time of transition. We love the Church and appreciated the opportunity to serve God and His people. Our pastoral service is in the spirit and tradition of the ministry given to Titus which was to “set right (straighten out) what was left undone” (Titus 1:5).

Appendix A

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**Our Core Values**

**Christ Centered:** We value Christ and the gospel and believe that the gospel changes everything. From the start of our Christian lives to the finish, the gospel changes us from the inside out, causing us to grow in grace and reject religious moralism and all forms of idolatry (Rom 1:16-17; Col 1:6; 2 Pet 1:9; 3:18; 1 John 5:21). As part of that commitment to Christ and the gospel, we value reconciliation and the restoration of the relationship between God and humankind, and between people and other people (Eph 2:14-22).

**Formation Focused:** We value holistic health and cherish being formed into the image of Christ in all aspects of life—spiritual, emotional, intellectual, relational, and physical—that Christ may be increasingly manifest in us (Gal 4:19; Col 1:27; 1 Thes 5:23). We see formation flowing naturally out of a commitment to the gospel.

**Missional Ministry:** We value missional ministry, which involves a commitment to actively engage our culture with the gospel message. We believe that being a called and sent people will flow naturally from our intimacy with God, because what we cherish and value, we will joyously commend to others (Ps 67:1-3; 1 Chron 16:8)! We view the church as a called-out and sent, disciple-making community of faith as it is revealed in the word of God.

**Teamwork:** We value collaborative teams and teamwork where each team member submits to the counsel of other team members (Rom 16:21f; Phil 3:17). We value accountability, innovation, and working together in a community of believers who listen to one another, practice the “one another” commands, and are committed to journeying together in our relationship with Christ.