

Dear Oak Lawn Community Baptist Church Family,

The OLCBC Search Committee is pleased to announce that we have voted to recommend Rev. Dr. Linda Hartley, our current Interim Pastor, to the congregation to be called to be our new Settled Pastor!

Rev. Dr. Hartley holds a PhD in Political Science from Rutgers University, as well as a Master of Divinity from Andover Newtown Theological School. She has ministerial experience at multiple churches across New England, including Westborough, MA (Associate), Norwich VT (Interim), Barrington (Associate) and Slatersville, RI (Interim), in addition to having served at Oak Lawn for over a year as our Interim Pastor.

Although ABCORI generally discourages churches from hiring their Interim Pastor as their Settled Pastor, we requested, and were granted, an exception, allowing Pastor Linda the opportunity to apply for our Settled Pastor position. ABCORI leadership is well aware of the difficulty over the past several years to find quality candidates to fill open pastoral positions, particularly part time positions. ABCORI leadership also acknowledged that our search committee had done our due diligence, and had explored all available options to find the right candidate for our position.

Our evaluation process was the same as for any applicant. We received Pastor Linda's resume and cover letter from ABCORI. We thoroughly reviewed her materials, and carefully prepared interview questions. We conducted a virtual interview, which went very well, and followed up with an in-person interview, which also went very well. It was after this second interview that the search committee voted unanimously to recommend Pastor Linda to the congregation.

Pastor Linda's ordination is from the United Church of Christ. If the congregation votes to confirm her as our Settled Pastor, she will complete the process to have her ordination formally recognized by ABCORI. This process typically takes on the order of nine months. Linda has already satisfied one of the key requirements of this process, having completed the course: *Baptist History, Identity, and Polity*. Linda's Installation Service would take place after her ordination has been officially recognized by ABCORI, although she can begin her service as our pastor once the congregation approves her candidacy.

There is one administrative detail that we need to care for. The church's bylaws have a section that states that once a pastor is called, their Installation Service shall occur within three months. Therefore, we will ask the congregation to approve extending the timeframe for the Installation Service from three months to one year, to allow time for Pastor Linda to complete the process to have her ordination formally recognized by ABCORI.

We are planning to hold a "Candidating Weekend" on February 1-2.

On **Saturday, February 1, from 4 – 7pm**, the Search Committee will host an informal gathering with refreshments, where members of the congregation can join Pastor Linda and the Search Committee to ask any questions they may have regarding search process, or Linda's background.

On **Sunday, February 2**, at the end of our Worship Service, we will call to order a Congregational Meeting, where the congregation will vote on the question of calling Pastor Linda as our Settled Pastor, as well as to approve an extension from three months to one year for her Installation Service. Assuming the vote has a favorable outcome, we will have a celebratory coffee hour to follow.

We are hoping you will join us for these events, as we begin this next chapter in the life of our church.

Blessings and warmest regards,

Your OLCBC Search Committee:

John McCann

Joanne Wales

Corinne Ricketson

Bob Kolb

Sue McMillen

Scott Lewis