

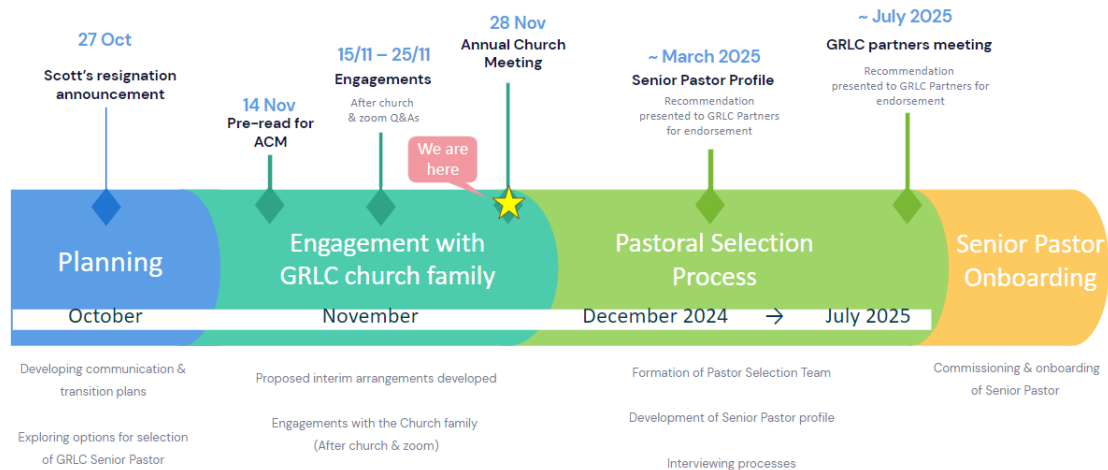
RESOLUTION REGARDING THE GRLC SENIOR PASTOR TRANSITION PLAN

Proposed Resolution

The partners of GRLC approve the GRLC Senior Pastor Transition plan as proposed by the CLT.

SENIOR PASTOR TRANSITION PLAN

Senior Pastor Transition Overview



Introduction

This plan outlines the process for transitioning to a new Senior Pastor (SP) at Georges River Life Church (GRLC) in 2025. The Church Leadership Team (CLT) recognise that our church family will experience a wide range of emotions throughout the transition journey, and that is completely normal. Our goal is to ensure a transparent, smooth and prayerful transition, keeping the congregation informed and involved while we continue to pursue our mission and vision.

Guiding Principles

This transition plan is based on the following:

1. Our church's mission and vision are unchanged.
2. The new Senior Pastor will be a full-time position.
3. The church's Partners will appoint the new Senior Pastor in line with section 5(b) of our constitution, which says:

“The Senior Minister shall be elected or removed upon a three-fourths (75%) majority vote of those present and voting, with a quorum of 50% of active membership, at a meeting of which two Sundays’ notice has been given.”

4. All formal decisions will be made at Church Meetings, starting with the Annual Church Meeting (ACM) on 28th November 2024 and with additional meetings as needed.

Concurrent Activity

While this transition plan is in motion, the following activities will also take place:

1. Our church’s mission and vision will keep moving forward, with all ministries and services continuing as planned.
2. Regular monitoring of our financial position to ensure alignment with the approved budget.
3. Recruitment and appointment of a new Operations Manager, with input from the Church Leadership Team (CLT).
4. Minor adjustments to staffing roles and responsibilities to ensure smooth coverage of the current Senior Pastor’s two and a half days role.
5. We will implement a clear plan to provide transparent communication, that support both staff and the whole church, including a timeline for each key step in the transition.

Key Tasks for the Transition

There are several phases to this process, including the departure of Scott Morrison, our current Senior Pastor, interim leadership arrangements, selecting and appointing the new Senior Pastor, and finally, settling into the new leadership. Some of these tasks will happen simultaneously, and progress in one area may influence others.

While this plan focuses on the practical steps, we are also committed to spiritual discernment during this time—through prayer, fasting, and teaching—as we seek God’s guidance in this new season for our church.

Task 1 - Departure of the current Senior Pastor

Scott advised the Church Leadership Team (CLT) Chair 23rd August 2024 that he planned to step down from the Senior Pastor role in late January 2025. He will take a combination of Annual Leave and Long Service Leave, with his final day in the role at the end of July 2025. His letter of resignation was received on 30th September 2024.

1. Actions taken so far:
 - a. The Baptist Association was advised of Scott’s intended departure 7th October 2024.
 - b. The CLT developed a number of plans designed to support and communicate this transition process that they approved on 8th October.
 - c. The CLT agreed 8th October to the request that the Morrison family remain part of Georges River Life Church, which has been their church family for many years. This would be reviewed if an internal applicant for the Senior Pastor role is not chosen. There will be a period of absence for Scott once a new Senior Pastor is appointed.
 - d. The Staff were advised of Scott’s intended departure on 15th October 2024.

- e. The Partners and Congregation were advised 27th October 2024 and 3rd November 2024 at Sunday services, via email, and in the weekly newsletter.
- f. A Q&A session was held at Peakhurst on 3rd November 2024, in person after the morning service and both in person and over zoom after the evening service. An in-person session was held at Chipping Norton on 10th November after the service.
- g. Distribution of this Transition Plan to all partners for review.

2. Upcoming actions and decisions:

- a. Approval of the 2025 Budget at the Annual Church Meeting (ACM) 28th November 2024.
- b. Endorsement of the Transition Plan at the ACM on 28th November 2024.
- c. Vote for the candidates nominated for the Pastor Selection Team (PST) at the ACM on 28th November 2024.
- d. Extraordinary Meetings in 2025 for partners to approve the new Senior Pastor Profile (around March 2025) and vote on the appointment of the new Senior Pastor (around July 2025).
- e. Scott's final departure and handover to the new Senior Pastor is expected by the end of July 2025 at the conclusion of his leave.
- f. Farewell arrangements to celebrate Scott are planned to occur in February.

Task 2 – Interim Arrangements

An Interim Senior Pastor will not be appointed; our current organisation structure already has staff reporting to Ben Rusin, our Lead Pastor. Ben will take on many of the Senior Pastor's responsibilities, while other Senior Pastor duties and some of his existing Lead Pastor responsibilities will be shared with or delegated to other team members.

Key actions:

1. Prior to Scott's leave in February 2025, a comprehensive list of responsibilities for both the Senior Pastor and Lead Pastor will be collated to guide the distribution of duties. Additionally, Scott's key tasks and external relationships will be documented.
2. Ben will continue to oversee the team as Lead Pastor. The CLT will work closely with Ben as he oversees the management of staff and church operations at both Peakhurst and Chipping Norton, as well as the redistribution of duties across the team.
3. A budget for 2025, which includes additional one-off transition-related costs, will be presented at the Annual Church Meeting.
4. A monitoring system will be put in place to ensure the interim arrangements are running smoothly, led by the Pastor Selection Team and CLT in 2025.

Task 3 – New Senior Pastor Selection

The Church Leadership Team (CLT) carefully considered several options for selecting the next Senior Pastor, weighing the challenges and opportunities of each. These options can be discussed further if needed.

As Scott steps down from the role of Senior Pastor, the church has the opportunity to reflect on our needs for the next Senior Pastor. The new position will be a full-time role, which will likely lead to other organisational changes.

The culture at Georges River Life Church has developed a strong and capable staff leadership team, positioning us well for the future and the important task of selecting a new Senior Pastor. Our team has five Accredited Pastors on staff who have grown significantly in their roles and are professionally qualified for the Senior Pastor position, as well as additional Accredited Pastors within our congregation. Choosing an internal applicant would offer continuity and build on the solid foundation of our church's mission, vision, and culture.

Initially, the CLT planned to conduct an internal search first, with the option to expand to external applicants if necessary. However, after considering the feedback from the congregation, the CLT has chosen to pursue a process open to both internal and external applicants. This broader approach reflects our commitment to openness and discernment, seeking God's guidance for the Senior Pastor best suited to lead GRLC in this new season.

Throughout this process, we will engage with the congregation and the Baptist Association to ensure transparency, collective discernment, and alignment with the vision of our church community.

Pastor Selection Team (PST)

A Pastor Selection Team (PST) will be formed to oversee this process. They will report directly to the CLT. A Baptist Association representative will also be available to guide and support them through the process. They will be tasked with:

1. Developing a Senior Pastor profile and Position Description through a consultative process with the CLT, church staff and congregation.
2. Overseeing recruitment processes including advertising the position, assessing applicants against the Profile and conducting interviews.
3. Communicating and reporting decisions and updates to the CLT and congregation.
4. Recommending an applicant to the CLT who will then bring the nomination to the congregation for a final vote.

The CLT will nominate representatives for the PST, including three congregational partners (one from each service: Peakhurst AM, Peakhurst PM, and Chipping Norton) and three CLT members. These representatives will be voted on at the Annual Church Meeting on 28th November 2024.

This method aligns with our church's mission, vision while ensuring a thorough and transparent selection process.

Task 4 - Immediate Action on appointment of new Senior Pastor

Organisational and Management Changes

The CLT anticipates that a subsequent review of the wider organisational structure for staff at GRLC will need to be undertaken in late 2025 once the successful Senior Pastor has been appointed. This structural review will be undertaken in partnership between the new Senior Pastor and the CLT to identify the optimal structure for delivering on the vision, mission and strategic focus areas of Georges River Life Church within the approved operating budget.

Finance Plan

As part of the church's commitment to financial sustainability, a financial review will likely be conducted in alignment with the church's overall strategy. The new Senior Pastor may also suggest further changes based on the results of this review.

Outgoing Senior Pastor

It's important to set clear guidelines for Scott's role as a valued member of our church once he steps down as Senior Pastor. We encourage everyone to fully support the new Senior Pastor, giving them the confidence to lead.

Looking ahead

While this is a season of transition, the mission of Georges River Life Church remains unwavering. Our community, built on a foundation of faith, will continue to stand strong. As we navigate this change together, we encourage the congregation to support one another, seek God's guidance, and look forward with hope and anticipation to all He has in store for us.

As Moses said to Joshua in Deuteronomy 31:8: "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

The CLT is excited for what God is doing in our midst and look forward to partnering with you all during this process.

Any suggested amendments to the proposed Senior Pastor Transition Plan need to be emailed to clt@grlc.org.au by 5.00pm 21 November 2024.