



The journey through my vocational calling has been intentional. My desire to follow Jesus Christ and allow his existence to permeate my life has developed prayerful proactive discernment. God provides the necessary time and space for me to discern how to minister to and with the local church. At times I experience great clarity with many details while other times I see only a single minute detail to guide me as a faithful follower.

Many minute details created great clarity and led me to hear the call to pastor at Jersey, Lexington, in January 2016. My wife, Lauren, and I were open to see that God was guiding an imminent transition for our family during 2015. That healthy vulnerability merged with an openness from Jersey as they healthily searched for a new pastor.

My wife says, “The health of a church is in part determined by how intentional the people are concerning the ministries of the church, making sure they are current and contextual.” Jersey’s intentional interim period, led by Don Durham, was a time of healthy, honest reflection on the past while focusing on the future through the Holy Spirit’s guidance. This time allowed the church to concisely understand its own values and consolidate them so the church’s priorities were also clearly understood. Prayer, conversation, persistence, and faith helped the church trust that God was providing a vision for the future which would be different than ever before.

Pastor Search Committee member Becky Myers said, “(My) main prayer and request was that, while the church was searching for the person God wanted to be our pastor, he/she would be a Spirit-filled servant.”

I try to be sensitive and respond appropriately to the Holy Spirit. Jersey is comprised of believers who live the same way.

As a church, we are responding appropriately. Conversation as a church to be intentional with our ministry has led us to begin four new theme-based Sunday school classes for all ages. We are going to begin the AWANA ministry for our children starting January 2018, which will be led by numerous children’s leaders and our new family minister, Megan Hager. We also have completed training for the Stephen Ministry which will begin Fall 2018. We believe this program of care is vital for our church and community.

We have experienced prayerful intentionality through our Wednesday evening church-wide ministries. When I first began my pastorate, Wednesday evenings were composed of a sparsely attended prayer meeting and Bible study. Last summer,

we revised. Wednesday evenings now begin with a meal, a Bible study, and then a church-wide local mission project on the first and second Wednesday of each month. On the third and fourth Wednesday, children and youth mission groups meet. Our mission project team coordinates with local organizations for these mission project nights.

We have worked with the local pregnancy center, assisted living centers, senior centers, schools, local fire and EMS stations, the local prison, hospital, and Operation Christmas Child.

The church members are enthusiastic. Andie Smith says, “It is exciting to see all the age groups involved in missions on Wednesday evenings.” Tim Trantham adds, “The movement [from the church] is what excites me.” The church ministering together with and to our community provides the foundation that allows us to faithfully embrace the transitions.

I agree with David Penninger who says, “Continued prayer will be one of the largest needs as we move into the future [in a healthy manner].”

## guidance from the holy spirit

by Matt Riggsbee, Senior Pastor, Jersey, Lexington