

## McCoy Pastoral Transition Time

### During times of transition...

- There will be a wide range of emotions. That's ok. It's normal.
- Others will feel some of the same emotions you are; you're not alone.
- It's ok to feel what you do. God Himself felt a variety of emotions when on this earth. He created us with emotions. They are good.
- There are normal, predictable stages

### The Transition Bridge: Settled – Unsettling – Chaos – Re-settling – Settled



- No clean break between stages
- Stages have no timetable
- We will process these stages at different paces
- Be patient with yourself and with each other

### Expectations:

- Unrealistic to expect this to be totally smooth with no hiccups
- Realistic to expect delays, change of plans, stress, fear, etc.
- Prepare for some messy-ness: "if you pray for rain, be prepared to deal with some mud."
- If things get chaotic during transition, it doesn't mean we're doing something wrong, it just means we're in transition!
- We will grieve a loss
- **Paradox:** This will be difficult...and good! (**not** difficult **or** good) You will see paradox throughout the stages.

### Spiritual Growth:

- These challenges can lead to a deeper walk with God (Ps 23, Isaiah 58:11)
- This can be a rich time in our church's history (Ps 78:3-4)
- Stay grounded in Christ (Col 2:6-7)
- Remember the character of God (Psalm 103:2)
- This can lead to deeper fellowship in the body as we walk this path of pastoral transition together.
- Let transition be part of our transformation (Job 23:10)

**What might we experience at each stage? As we discuss emotions/what we feel in each stage, we encourage Pastor and Nancy to respond too.**

**Settled:** Pastor Ray and Nancy have been here 33 years. In light of this, what do we know?

- ...who he is.
- ... his wife and family
- ... his preaching style
- ... that on Sunday we'll have a well-studied, biblically-grounded, expositional sermon
- ... that Sunday school will start at 11:05 and go until 12:05 (Ha! Ha!)
- ...an emphasis on missions
- ...Nancy keeping up plants outside
- ...Nancy teaching little ones
- ... what else?

What words/phrases might describe this stage?

- Comfortable
- Routine
- How I fit, role defined
- Secure, stable
- Known
- "itchy" – ready for something new
- Complacent, bored

**Unsettled:** Pastor Ray has announced his retirement. What responses did we have? What feelings/concerns came with this? What words/phrases might describe this time?

- Stunned, surprised, blindsided, shocked
- Expected
- Abandoned? Angry?
- "I don't like change!"
- Who will do all the stuff Pastor and Nancy do?
- What if I don't like whoever we call next?
- What if I do like him? Won't that be disloyal to Pastor Ray?
- Fearful
- Vulnerable, insecure
- Grieving

Or maybe...

- Planning and preparing
- Excitement, adventure

***He's still here for a few months, but then August 27...***

**CHAOS:** The time will come when Pastor and Nancy actually leave. Now what?

- Sure, we'll see them around but he's not our pastor anymore ... and we don't know yet who our next pastor will be
- A good farewell party, but we recognize its permanence!
- Next Sunday an interloper may be in the pulpit (and I'll tell you what – he's no Ray Laborde!)

What feelings and emotions might we expect? What words/phrases might describe this stage?

- Disorganized
- Frustration: Little things seem like a big deal
- Overwhelmed, confusion
- The potential for impatience and misunderstanding
- I don't like change
- Tired: physically, emotionally, mentally
- A time for short accounts if we disagree
- I hope the deacons know what they're doing
- Alone – my pastor understood me – he was there when I needed counsel; he led me to the Lord
- It's never going to be the same
- Opportunity for the flesh
- God meets us where we're at ... but so does Satan

**Paradox:** Some people will embrace this chaos! Just part of their makeup. They may feel excitement, a sense of something big coming.

**Resettling:** There will come a time when we begin to get our footing and get through the chaos. We'll have called a new pastor and starting to get to know him and his family.

What words/phrases might describe this stage?

- We are figuring out what he's like; what his style is.
- We don't know him very well yet; new in relationship.
- New ways of doing things may begin. Change!
- Tentative
- The dance
- Risky
- Comparison
- Learning
- Hope
- You have permission to be happy and excited about the next stage.

**New settled:** You may not recognize it right away, but there comes a day when we feel settled again...a new normal! It's not the same normal as what we had in the "settled" stage, but a new normal!

What words/phrases might describe this stage?

- A new routine; a new normal
- Getting used to a new leader, his style and personality
- Comfortable
- Stable
- Known
- Deeper relationships with one another because of what we've come through together
- Sense of belonging; know role and where I fit in again
- Reengaged

**What about Pastor, Nancy and their family?**

Many of the same kind of emotions as we experience but we stay and they leave  
A loss of ...?

- Community-regular contacts
- Status and set responsibilities
- Belonging
- Relationships-they change
- House they've been in for 33 years
- Routine-knowing what I'm going to do when I wake up in the morning
- Homebase for my family

**Paradox:**

- They go with many special memories
- New home
- More time with family
- Freer schedule

How can we help?

- Pray
- Meals/physical help during move to new house

**Good good-byes: Build a RAFT**

- **Reconciliation:** as much as you can, make wrongs right; leave well to enter well
- **Affirmation:** tell people what you appreciate about them and the impact they've had on you; don't assume they know
- **Farewells:** take time to say good-bye
- **Think Ahead:** plan and get excited for what comes next

*"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." (Psalm 139:9-10)*