

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
ABINGTON, MA



Pastoral Search Committee

April 19, 2018

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord,  
plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

Dear First Baptist Church family,

Your Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) is pleased to announce that we are prepared to present to the congregation a candidate for the position of Settled Pastor of our church. Enclosed, please find a biographical summary of the Reverend Stephen Sanden (San-deen) of Penn Yan, NY, whom we are recommending for your consideration. We have, with the help of the Holy Spirit searched prayerfully, carefully and diligently for a great period and we appreciate your patience. We praise God for what we believe to be His choice for our congregation.

Pastor Sanden and his wife have visited our community, visited our church, and the PSC has heard him preach in a neutral pulpit. If the congregation is led to extend a call, he will give the invitation his full consideration.

The PSC will be holding a Candidate Weekend on May 19 & 20. On Saturday, there will be a series of meetings with the boards of the church and key employees. At 5:30pm on Saturday night there will be a Meet and Greet church supper for the entire congregation followed by a question time for the candidate (childcare will be provided). During the dinner, Pastor Sanden and his wife will visit each table giving each group a few minutes to chat and speak with them. Candidating is an extremely important part of the process and we hope you can make time to participate in it. The Candidate Weekend is a time where everyone has a chance to get to know Pastor Sanden and his wife, Karen. On Sunday, Pastor Sanden will visit the Adult Sunday School class, help lead the

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*You are invited to be part of*  
*The Candidate Weekend*  
**May 19-20, 2018**



Saturday meetings with Board and Key Employees

**5:30 pm Appetizers and punch served in the Welcome Center**

**6:00 pm Dinner-Entrée provided please bring side dishes and desserts to share**

After Dinner time for questions and answers with the Candidate Rev Stephen Sanden  
(childcare provided)

Sunday May 20, 2018

Pastor Steve to attend the Adult Sunday school class

Pastor Steve to bring the morning message

**Noon a Share the cost Luncheon (Pete Morrill preparing)**

1:00 pm Special Business Meeting with Members voting by secret ballot on Calling Rev  
Sanden

**Please R.S.V.P by May 13<sup>th</sup> for Saturday dinner and Sunday Lunch**  
**Sign up at church, email [office@abingtonfbc.com](mailto:office@abingtonfbc.com) or call 781-878-2447**

## An Introduction to Reverend Steven Sanden



Pastor Sanden (*pronounced 'Sandeem'*) currently serves as the Pastor at the First Baptist Church of Penn Yan, NY. He is a lover of music; he played the trumpet in the U.S. Army band and his favorite hymn is "Be Thou My Vision". Pastor Steve originally hails from Warren, Pennsylvania; however, his wife Karen was born and raised in Boston. They originally met while he was attending the Baptist Church of All Nations in Taunton, Massachusetts and they were married six months after Pastor Steve began his first pastorate in Pennsylvania. He has also served as a pastor in our area and during that time he was actively involved in TABCOM and the Old Colony association, having served on the Board of Camps & Conferences and helping to establish the John Myles Evangelism School as a cofounder.

Pastor Steve's wife Karen has three children who are all grown and live in the greater Boston area and Florida. Pastor Steve and Karen enjoy spending time with their grandchildren and look forward to the opportunity to be closer to them with a move to eastern Massachusetts.

Pastor Sanden received a Masters of Divinity from Andover Theological School in 1999. His first pastorate was in Warren, Pennsylvania. He then pastored the First Baptist Church in Kingston, Massachusetts for six years before moving on to Florida where he served as the Minister of Music at the First Baptist Church of Bunnell, Florida. While there, he also became the Senior Chaplain at Okeechobee Correctional Institute in Okeechobee, Florida. He has been serving at the First Baptist Church in Penn Yan, New York since 2012.

Pastor Steve surrendered to Christ in 1974 and soon after, he served our country in the Army. His next pursuit was a musical career; however, playing at night in bars and clubs proved to be an empty and miserable life. He rededicated his life to Christ and began attending the Baptist Church of All Nations in Taunton where he was baptized. In addition to running his own music store, he began teaching Sunday School, singing in the choir, serving on boards, leading worship and leading community services that the church was involved in. He also became involved in prison and nursing home ministries and a drug rehabilitation program. As he became more deeply involved in the services of the church and helping to

lead it, his Pastor encouraged him to attend seminary; which he eventually did, closing his music store and completing his degree.

The Pastoral Search Committee has found Pastor Steve to be a humble man who has absolute faith and trust in God. We believe that Pastor Steve's easy-going nature will allow him to fit into our church; he is quick to put people at ease with a quip or light joke. In our various meetings with him we have found he and his wife engaging, easy to talk to, and absolutely committed to their shared faith in the Lord, His grace, mercy and blessings. We feel that over all, he is an excellent people person and a servant leader. He shares our concern for the future of the Church and that the future relies on determining how best to reach out to Millennials and serve the community. He is excited to engage and join a church where together we can work to answer those important questions.

He is sensitive to the need to keep the faithful members of the 'church' involved in the life of the church. We feel that he will serve well, and bring to First Baptist Abington a vibrant ministry that reaches out beyond our walls.

Among Pastor Steve's key strengths are preaching, pastoral care, visitation, planning and management. From a preaching perspective, he favors an expository method, that is, to present a passage to the congregation then delve into its meaning and impact on one's life or situation. Complimentary to his use of expository preaching, he also likes to do sermon series as time and schedule allows; which permits him to take the congregation through a long passage, chapter or portion of a particular book, or even a whole book (the shorter ones). The committee discussed and probed Pastor Steve quite a bit on his philosophy on and approach to visitation. The committee believes that Pastor Steve will more than adequately meet the visitation needs and expectations of our congregation. Importantly, it was clear to the PSC that he continually seeks opportunities to mentor and encourage church leadership. Pastor Steve also believes strongly in working within our denomination, working with other churches, and finding commonalities and areas of shared interest with other faiths.