



The Designated Pastor Nominating
Committee presents the
CANDIDATE for
PASTOR &
HEAD of STAFF

**REVEREND
DOCTOR
RICHARD
LAPEHN**



Orchard Lake

Community Church, Presbyterian



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DEAR FRIENDS AND SIBLINGS IN CHRIST,



“Sent into the world to serve” is a mission goal that the members and leaders of the Orchard Lake Community Church take seriously. The dozens of mission efforts supported by this loving congregation drew my attention to your faith and life together.

A 20th century Swiss theologian, Emil Brunner, wrote, “The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning.” The flame of compassion for those in need is obvious in the life of the Orchard Lake Community Church. I look forward to working alongside the devoted members and friends of OLCC,P as we seek to obey the call of our Lord upon our energy, resources, and lives.

My prayer for Orchard Lake Community Church is that we would journey toward convivial, inspiring worship, visionary hospitality, and responsive mission. In a world where discord and distance between persons are normative, Christ’s followers are called to create that safe space where all are welcome regardless of titles, ancestry, or social status. May we be found faithful to our call.

In Christ,
Rich Lapehn

**I BELIEVE THAT OUR LIVES ARE TO REFLECT THE
GLORY OF GOD THROUGH THE WORDS WE SPEAK
AND THE ACTIONS WE PURSUE.
WE ARE TO WORK TO EXTEND THE KINGDOM OF
GOD. –RICH LAPEHN**

WHERE IS GOD CALLING YOU?

WE ARE CALLED TO OFFER BODY, SOUL, MIND, AND STRENGTH FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM. —RICH LAPEHN

I believe that God is calling me to a ministry that influences others toward a spirit of service and meaningful contributions to mission fulfillment. The United Way of Greater Cleveland recognized me as a "Community Hero" for my service in my community and my mission to those inside and outside the life of the Church. As a result, I received the honor of carrying the Olympic Torch during part of its journey through northeast Ohio.

Having had the joy of serving as a leader for many mission teams – my mission/study experiences include ample time with Habitat for Humanity, four journeys to West Virginia, one trip along the southern border to a Mexican border ministry site leading a coalition of several Presbyterian Churches, the Pittsburgh Project, ongoing efforts with the Akron-Canton regional food bank, and our local Soup Kitchen – I look forward to working in a ministry setting that values mission to those near and far.

Over the course of many years, I have been engaged in small group ministries that provide a safe space in which concerns can be shared, prayers may be lifted, and joys celebrated. I look forward to working in a ministry setting that creates brave spaces where people with different outlooks and from different faith backgrounds can learn to hear each other and interact with each other to the glory of God.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

DPNC - THE PROCESS

A year ago, the congregation of OLCC,P commissioned the members of the Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC) with the responsibility of finding a candidate for the position of Pastor and Head of Staff.

Our work began in earnest with a congregation feedback session we titled "positive pondering and pizza". With insight gained from this gathering, the prior Self Study, and the January 2019 publication of the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT survey), we developed our Ministry Information Form (MIF).

The MIF in simplest terms is a resume of OLCC,P. It contains answers to multiple narrative questions describing who we are as a church community, our vision for ministry and mission, along with the desired leadership characteristics you indicated you wanted in our next pastor.

During the past ten months, the DPNC had the opportunity to review more than 75 Personal Information Forms (PIFs) from pastors that were matched to our MIF. We also sent our MIF to 12 Presbyterian affiliated Seminaries and 34 Presbyteries in Michigan and the surrounding states. We contacted some local pastors, six staffing organizations, and other churches who were also searching for pastors to exchange ideas and gain insight. We interviewed multiple pastors and were enlightened with information from social media.

While we were doing that work, God was beginning to reveal his plan for our church.

ABOUT PASTOR RICH

A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, Rev. Dr. Rich Lapehn was baptized and reared in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Ordained in 1991, he has served three congregations in northeast Ohio, all in the Akron region.

Enjoying reading and learning, Rich has earned degrees from Wabash College (A.B.), Union Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (D.Min.).

Married for thirty-five years, Rich and Laura met while singing in a high school swing choir. Together, they enjoy movies, music, boating, and beach vacations. Rich is a sports fan, though it seems the teams he roots for rarely take home any championships.

For over thirty years, Laura has shared her infectious love of learning as a primary educator in the public schools. She has been a National Board Certified teacher and a successful grant writer for her district. Her tireless efforts in children's drama have introduced hundreds of students to the joys of theater and classic tales.

They are the proud parents of two adult daughters, Dr. Samantha (Lapehn) Young and Allison Lapehn. Their elder daughter, Samantha, recently completed her terminal degree at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Samantha and her husband, Dillon, reside in the Seattle area, where she is a research scientist at the Seattle Children's Research Institute. Allie speaks Mandarin and lives in Beijing, China, where she is employed by the American Chamber of Commerce in the Government Affairs and Policy Department.

The current Lapehn home includes two pets, Frankie, a calico rescue cat, and Winston, a beloved shih tzu.



DPNC - OUR JOURNEY TOWARD PASTOR RICH

The DPNC began our initial dialogue with Rich at the end of June. As discussions continued, we had the opportunity to gain insight into his ministry and his passion for mission and outreach. We learned he had gone on multiple mission trips and enjoyed working locally with food banks and a soup kitchen project. Rich was also recognized with the "Community Hero" award from the United Way for his work to establish community gardens on empty lots that were once occupied by drug houses.

One of Rich's favorite Bible verses is Galatians 6:9. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." We believe during his life of ministry Rich has demonstrated that he lives by those words.



Rich Allie & Laura Lapehn, Samantha & Dillion Young

SERVICE BEYOND THE SANCTUARY

Being deeply involved in community life, I have had the privilege of serving in many leadership positions both inside and outside the Church. In both, I have been entrusted to lead with transparency and accountability. During my thirteen years of elected service to the non-partisan City Council of Rittman, Ohio, I was elected Council President and served as Mayor pro tem. I have also served as a Board member of the Pastoral Counseling Service of Akron, and President of the Barberton Kiwanis civic club.

In our denomination, I have filled many roles on behalf of the church: Moderator of various Presbytery committees, member of the Committee on Ministry, Moderator of the Presbytery, Moderator of the Presbytery Council, and elected Commissioner to the 223rd General Assembly of the PC(USA).

Through my initiative, nearly all of the Akron area Presbyterian Churches are presently working with grant-funded leadership from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary on Adaptive and Innovative Ministry within their respective contexts.

**I AM A TRUSTWORTHY
LEADER AND CONNECT WELL
IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE.**
—RICH LAPEHN



ADAPTING TO CHALLENGES

During the pandemic, I transitioned my congregation to a hybrid model of worship, meetings, and fellowship (online and in-person). The number of persons participating increased despite our distance. Our congregational communication improved while we were apart from one another.

In addition, as the Moderator of the Eastminster Presbytery Council at that time, I led the meetings in which our Presbytery determined the way in which we would navigate safely through these unprecedented times.



SUCCESS AND FULFILLMENT

In the past 20 years, I have led two congregations in three major fundraising campaigns. At my previous call in Rittman, I organized two campaigns: one for a new pipe organ, and one for a roof replacement. In Barberton, I led a capital campaign for a pipe organ renovation. All of the fundraising campaigns I have led have over-subscribed their fundraising goals.

Though our fundraising goals were nearly the size of our annual budgets, more funds were pledged and contributed than were necessary to complete the task. Their generous responses were indicators of trust.

I have been successful connecting the needs of the church with events and opportunities within their respective municipalities. I wrote and received grant money for a church elevator. I wrote and was awarded through Federal dollars the complete cost of razing a church-owned property at no expense to the church.

LEADERSHIP AND GROWTH

One area of growth regarding my leadership has been my deliberate desire to become more collaborative. Every organization is richer, fuller, and more able to fulfill its mission when a greater number of participants add their gifts to the common effort. In the Church, my collaborative style means that more persons are asked to share in the formation of goals, the plan of action, and the fulfillment of our Spirit-led aspirations.

One of the joys of our Presbyterian form of government is that the Elders of a local congregation and higher judicatories hold equal power and responsibility with the clergy. I believe that our system of government is extremely judicious. No leader, regardless of talent, wit, or wisdom, can accomplish as much as the body of Christ can when willing disciples of Christ work together.

LEADERSHIP AND RESTORATION

I am well acquainted with transitional ministry. In my present call, I have led the congregation from a lengthy period of frustration with the Presbytery to a time of embracing the richness of the Presbytery and our denomination. The congregation experienced turmoil prior to my arrival. Argumentative spirits were present; many families departed the church. The Session called the Presbytery leadership to fix the problem. Many Elders felt the outside spiritual counsel exacerbated the problem. I was called as a Designated Pastor precisely because of their quarrels and resulting heartache with the previous pastor(s) and the Presbytery.

In these past eleven years, I have sought to restore trust in the pastorate and the Presbytery. I believe I have succeeded. We have hosted a Presbytery meeting, and the congregation has fully supported my leadership in the Presbytery.

Owing to the number of families who left the church prior to my arrival, there were few children remaining. Upon my urging, we started a Wednesday club for children in the community. I recruited children by handing out fliers (with the approval of the local School Board) at the nearby Elementary School. When our program began, six students appeared. Momentum was gained and by the end of the semester our average count was well over twenty students.

It has been a true blessing to see our congregation embrace the Presbytery and the diverse children of our community as we reach out to them with compassion and generosity.

**GOD'S SPIRIT WILL MOVE US TOWARD SANCTIFICATION
AS WE HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE THE LORD. –RICH LAPEHN**

DPNC - PRESBYTERY EXPERIENCE

Rich has many years of involvement within the Eastminster Presbytery and has an excellent understanding of church polity. He has served on multiple committees including the Committee on Ministry (COM) and as moderator of the Presbytery. Currently he is serving as chairperson of the committee to find a new General Presbyter.

Because he is well versed on the Book of Order, Rich will be a valuable asset to Session. His understanding of PCUSA structure and organization with its application of biblical principles for the everyday life of the church will be invaluable for the development of church leadership.

At his current church, Rich is serving in the 11th year of what began as a 4-year call as designated pastor.

STATEMENT OF FAITH



I believe in the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), who created all things, and possesses infinite knowledge, power, and presence.

I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord of all and the only way to salvation. I believe in his virgin birth, his sinless life, his miracles, and his atoning death on the cross. I believe in Jesus' bodily resurrection, in his ascension to the right hand of God, and his personal return in power and glory.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is comforter, counselor, and advocate. God's Spirit will move us toward sanctification as we humble ourselves before the Lord.

All persons have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Therefore, all persons need redemption and reconciliation to our holy God. It is God's desire that none should perish, but that all persons should turn around and worship the Lord.

Salvation is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the work of our good deeds or religious ceremony.

I believe in the authority of God's Holy Scriptures as revealed by the Holy Spirit to the Church. I believe that God admonishes his people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for edification through the Scriptures and mutual encouragement.

I believe that God's justice is to be reflected in our desire for justice in our world; that is, we are to care for creation and all members of the created order without regard to race, gender, income, education, or identity.

I believe that God calls us to be faithful stewards of the resources of our world. It is our privilege and responsibility to serve the Lord with the time, talents, and treasure entrusted to us.



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THE GLORY OF GOD THROUGH THE WORDS WE
SPEAK AND THE ACTIONS WE PURSUE. WE ARE
TO WORK TO EXTEND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

—RICH LAPEHN

Our Mission Statement:
Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian is a community centered
on Jesus Christ, being transformed together
by God's grace, sent into the world.



DPNC - TAKING THE FINAL STEPS TO DISCOVER GOD'S WILL FOR OLCC,P

Patty Beaujon, Sandra Crane, Mark Grakul, Lauren Lewis, Steve Orr, Gowan Thamer, and Patrick Tyrrell

As a committee we have had an opportunity during the past few months to listen to some of Rich's sermons. We appreciate the use of his story telling and the examples he provides to help explain God's Word and its application to our life. His humor and wit are also appreciated.

The weekend of October 15 and 16, Rich and his wife Laura came to our area. We were delighted to meet Laura and learn more about their adult daughters Samantha and Allison. During our time together we had the opportunity to share multiple meals and fellowship.

On that Sunday Rich's sermon at a nearby Presbyterian church, centered around the power of prayer and the peace it provides in our life when we have a relationship and connection with God.

After hearing those words, it became even more evident that through your many months of prayers and support of our work as a committee, God had taken the final steps to reveal our next pastor.

With complete joy and unity the DPNC is privileged to present the candidate for the next pastor of Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian, the Reverend Doctor Richard Lapehn.



**Rev. Dr. Richard Lapehn
& Laura Lapehn**



Orchard Lake

Community Church, Presbyterian

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