

Questions and Answers about Chris and Sherry's Move

Q: Why are you moving?

A: Chris has been called to serve as a pastor of the Manassas Church of the Brethren.

Q: Did something happen to make you want to leave Oakton Church? Did someone ask you to leave?

A: No. We have had a wonderful ministry at Oakton. The church is vibrant, welcoming, affirming, and has been very receptive to our participation and leadership. Our mistakes have been graciously forgiven and our efforts greatly appreciated.

Q: What made you decide to accept the call to Manassas?

A: Our decision to accept the call was made up of many things. Among these, two things felt very important to us: First, we feel that we have unique gifts to share with the new congregation --- their needs and our gifts fit well together. Second, we have spent over three weeks of dedicated, prayer time each evening. As we've prayed, the call became more and more strongly confirmed in our hearts. The evening it was strongest for both of us was the evening, unknown to us, the search committee voted unanimously to call Chris as pastor.

Q: When will you move?

A: We will move in late August or early September. Chris' contract at Oakton Church of the Brethren will end on August 31 however we plan to take a few weeks of vacation in August.

Q: What should we tell our children?

A: There's no one single answer. Each child is different. And those closest to them will need to be attentive to their particular emotions and question. We are thankful for the many ways Oakton Church nurtures and loves its children. The Children's Ministry Coordinator here at Oakton Church will continue to provide guidance and support for parents and children during this transition.

It may be helpful to explain that pastors are called to churches "for a season." Pastor Chris was called to Oakton Church ten years ago to help us. Now he is going to another church to help them.

Q: Do you think that some Oakton Church members will follow you to Manassas?

A: We hope not. As Christians we join a church, not a pastor. The Oakton Church is a family of faith that is strengthened through the attendance and support of each of its members. As is currently the case, if members of one Northern Virginia Church of the Brethren show up at another, the pastor of their home church is notified so that a broader conversation can be held. During that conversation there is some gentle discouragement of transfer.

Q: Will you come back to visit us?

A: We may bump into each other every now and then. But it is not right for a pastor to visit the previous church until the new pastor is in place for a reasonable amount of time. In fact, unless explicitly requested by the Oakton Church Board or the new pastoral leadership, Chris cannot provide pastoral care to Oakton members beyond his employment here and will not visit the church for at least one year following the installation of the new, permanent pastor.

Q: Will Chris tell the new pastor about private things we shared with him?

A: An outgoing pastor will not share confidential information from previous pastoral care provided unless there is explicit permission given. Couples or individuals who have been counseling with Chris should understand that information is NOT passed to the new pastor. Nor does the previous pastor selectively encourage the new pastor to “check in on” particular people.