

# A Letter From The Candidate

Dear members of First Baptist Church Shelby,  
I am excited to write this letter to you today. My name is Asher Panton, and it is a privilege to introduce myself to you. As many of you may have heard this past Sunday, your pastor search team, under the leadership of Trevor McDaniel, has graciously recommended me to serve as your next lead pastor. I wish to commend your entire search team for their excellence, love, and thoughtfulness throughout the process.

For the past seven years, I have had the honor of loving and serving in the role of senior pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Greenville, North Carolina. The relationships I built and wisdom I gained in this calling are something I will always cherish. Before this pastorate I have had the privilege of leading various church ministries spanning all age groups – from adults to children, youth, and college students. I possess a deep-seated passion for relationally connecting to the church, a profound love for preaching and teaching, and an earnest desire to cast a vision to a church that sincerely loves Jesus Christ, our Lord and its surrounding community.

After much prayer and reflection, I am confident that God has called our family to join you in your journey ahead. I am excited about the way God has brought us together. I look forward to meeting each of you in person, and to discover the unlocked potentials you envision for your church. I am deeply humbled and thankful for the faithfulness of the Lord throughout this entire process. There have been moments in my personal life, as well as within the life of my family, when it has felt as though the Lord is guiding our every step; and I can say with certainty that this is one of those times.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Asher Panton



# From The Lead Pastor Search Committee

To the members of First Baptist Church Shelby,  
In Christ, we have united in prayer and support in search of our Lead Pastor. Operating under the mantra “Father, not my will, but His be done”, we are truly excited to present Asher Panton to the congregation!

The journey began by working with Dr. Bill Wilson of Center for Healthy Churches. Our faithful church membership spent several Sunday afternoons in roundtable discussions creating a profile and identifying traits we desired our Lead Pastor to display. The Transition Team sifted through this information and assembled the results to help create the profile of our leader. They also updated the church profile in detail, and that was very instrumental in sharing our church and community with candidates.

The Lead Pastor Search Committee was presented with these results and a pastor profile was created.

Dr. Wilson and his team scoured their network to provide candidates to engage in conversation. We conducted preliminary phone interviews, followed by “face to face” Zoom calls. From the initial interviews, we learned of Asher’s compassion, charisma, and an intentional life centered around Christ. Asher then visited Shelby for an in-person discussion followed by an additional interview with Asher’s wife, Raychel. Asher answered all the questions spiritually centered, pointing back to scripture, and felt genuine in every way. His sermons are thoughtfully prepared. We learned he is a compassionate leader who makes visits to homes, hospitals, and other nursing and rehab centers. He has a drive and mission to reach out to young adults and youth, bringing them closer to Christ. Asher seeks to empower staff and lay leaders to discern God’s vision for the congregation.

We are excited for Asher’s decision, his heart for people, and how he will strengthen First Baptist Church and our community through Christ. The committee unanimously supports Asher. I know our congregation will embrace Asher, Raychel, and their son, Jack, as they transition to FBC Shelby. We are overjoyed with the Lord’s direction and are very excited for the call weekend.

In prayerful anticipation,  
Trevor McDaniel  
Lead Pastor Search Committee Chair



# About the Pastor Candidate

## Education

- Master of Divinity, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2012
- Bachelor of Science, Pastoral Ministry Major, Business Minor, Southeastern University, 2006

## Experience

- Senior Pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Greenville, NC, 2017 - present
- Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church of Gastonia, Gastonia, NC, 2015-2017
- College and Young Adult Pastor, The Cause Church, Columbia, MD, 2013
- Youth Pastor, Mt. Zion Church, Cherryville, NC, 2006-2009
- College and Young Adult Ministry Intern, 2011-2012
- Youth Pastor Internship, Cornerstone Church, Plano, TX, 2009
- Church Ministry Intern, Coastal Community Church, Ocean City, MD, 2004-2005

Reverend Asher Panton is married to Raychel Panton and they have a five-year-old son named Jack. Raychel is currently studying to become a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

With over 17 years of pastoral experience, Asher has worked with youth, children, college, and senior adult ministries around the country. He is passionate about helping churches love God, one another, and their surrounding communities as well.



## Pastor Call Weekend Details

### Friday, February 23

**6:00 pm** Meeting and dinner with Pastor Search Committee and Deacons.

### Saturday, February 24

**8:00 am** Breakfast with Staff  
**2:00-4:00 pm** Church Family Meet and Greet in the Dover Activities Building with Asher and his family with a Q&A session from **3:30-4:00**.

### Sunday, February 25

**9:30 am** Worship Service. Asher will preach and a Church Conference with vote will follow.

### Schedule Note

Out of respect for privacy, Sunday's worship service will NOT be live-streamed, but a recording of the service will be made available at 1:00 pm.



# What People Are Saying

“Asher has a passion for the Lord and a shepherd’s heart for Christ’s church. He carries himself with humility, integrity, theological depth, and is sincere in his pastoral presence. He is personable and approachable, seeking to connect with people across generational lines. Asher takes his faith seriously and encourages those in the church to do the same with God’s call on their lives.”

*Dr. Andrew S. Rawls, Senior Pastor, Viewmont Baptist Church*

“Reverend Panton is a beloved and gifted pastor. He is an authentic and genuine person who relates well to people of all generations. He is a creative, collegial, compassionate, and caring leader to all those persons and organizations he serves.”

*Reverend Thomas G. Bayes, Jr.*

*Intentional Interim Minister, American Baptist Churches*

*Asher’s supervisor at FBC Gastonia*

“I have known Asher for many years, and was truly (and pleasantly!) surprised when his name surfaced as a person of interest to be our next pastor. He is warm, approachable, caring, wise, and eager to join us in our Lord’s work here at FBC. Raychel and their son Jack are fun people and are enthusiastic about this next step for them as a family. With our continued love and support for them, God will do great things for FBC and for Shelby.”

*Dr. Robert Canoy*

“Asher is one of the brightest, most thoughtful pastors I have encountered in recent years. He loves his family, loves Jesus, and loves his church: three essentials for an effective and Spirit-led pastor. I am thrilled that he has felt the call to come to FBC Shelby at the critical juncture and your life as a church.”

*Dr. Bill Wilson, Center for Healthy Churches*

“When I saw Asher’s résumé, I was impressed with his varied experiences. Then I spoke with him on the phone for a few minutes and I could feel him lean into the conversation – he’s a good listener! Later, we met with him in person, and his love of Jesus, his family, and growing the kingdom of God were evident. I appreciate his sweet spirit, his honesty, sincerity, and kindness – but most of all his desire to follow God’s call in his life I’m excited for the future of our church, and thankful to have seen the Holy Spirit’s hand guiding and leading us to Asher!”

*Debbie Patton*

“In our conversations with Asher Panton I am impressed by his kindness, humility, empathy, and flexibility. These are characteristics of a true Pastor.”

*Eduardo Steibel*

“Asher’s presence with us is truly an answered prayer. I feel God has prepared Asher’s heart for FBC Shelby in a way we don’t yet understand as he has heard his calling from the Lord and is ready to join us in our journey to grow God’s kingdom here at FBC Shelby.”

*Tina Still*

“Asher exemplifies a Biblical lifestyle and a love for the Lord. He desires to love and be engaged with his church congregation, and to be a faithful servant of God.”

*Adelyn Parker*

