

After Billy Graham's Grandson's Resignation, Coral Ridge Selects New Pastor

Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, called Rob Pacienza to serve as the church's next Lead Pastor, which was confirmed by a congregational vote following his sermon at the worship service.

The Coral Ridge Pulpit Search Committee conducted a thorough and extensive process, considering more than 60 pastoral candidates. Following nine months of interviewing, listening to sermons, conducting detailed research, speaking with leaders and seeking counsel, the committee unanimously agreed Pacienza was the strongest and most-qualified to lead and pastor the church.

"After a comprehensive and exhaustive search, we are pleased to announce that we found the best candidate right underneath our noses," said Rod Hayes, chairman of the Search Committee. "Rob brings a unique mix of appreciation for the history and tradition of Coral Ridge as well as a burning desire to capture the hearts of our city of Fort Lauderdale with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are excited about welcoming Rob to his new position of leadership at Coral Ridge and look forward to how God will use him in our midst."

Pacienza has been on staff of Coral Ridge for the past seven years, previously serving as executive pastor, and has a long history with the church.

"I am humbled and honored by the committee and congregation's trust in me to shepherd them through this next stage of what I believe will be an exciting time of faithful and fruitful ministry," said Pacienza. "This church is 'home' to me, and I cannot think of a congregation I would rather pastor."

At the age of 15, Pacienza heard the gospel for the first time during a mission trip with Coral Ridge. Shortly after sharing the Good News with his family, they joined the church and Pacienza began attending Westminster Academy, college-preparatory school ministry of Coral Ridge. It was there during new student orientation he met his future wife, Jen.

God's calling to ministry became evident 20 years ago to Pacienza when Coral Ridge's first pastor, Rev. D. James Kennedy, asked him, "Have you ever considered the ministry?"

Pacienza's first job was pulling cable for the cameras on Sunday mornings at Coral Ridge. He attended Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, and continued to intern with the Coral Ridge student ministry during his summers.

After graduating with a B.A. in Religion, Pacienza married Jen and began serving as student minister at Rio Vista Community Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he eventually became executive pastor in 2007.

In 2009, Pacienza answered the call to "come home" to Coral Ridge, first serving as the inreach pastor and eventually as the executive pastor.

In addition to Samford University, Pacienza graduated from Knox Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity. He and Jen have three children.

"I have seen firsthand God do incredible things through Coral Ridge," Pacienza said.