

Joy MCC Selecting and Beginning A Pastoral Transition Team (08/2010)

Pastoral Search Team Job Description

A pastoral search committee is a group of individuals with the task of selecting a pastoral candidate for recommendation to the church. The purpose of the Pastoral Search Committee is to discern the best candidate for the position and to recommend that person to the congregation. Some consider the Pastoral Search Team to be similar to a nominating committee, with the charge to bring a good candidate to the congregation for consideration, not to actually call a pastor.

Pastoral Search Team Member Characteristics

These characteristics describe the kind of characteristics that can be helpful for all members of a Pastoral Search Team:

1. Must agree to work within the parameters defined by the Guiding Documents of Joy MCC and to strive toward the achievement of the church culture outlined by the congregation of Joy MCC in those documents.
2. Committed to Joy MCC and actively involved in the church.
3. In agreement on the vision and mission of the church
4. Believes in the Holy Spirit's participation in the group process.
5. Demonstrates the following Personal Skills
 - a) Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
 - b) Lead by example.
 - c) Redemptive conflict resolution skills with emphasis on dialogue versus debate.
 - d) People skills
 - e) Ability to form and maintain healthy and constructive relationships.
 - f) Ability to express ideas verbally and in written form.
6. Understands the search task, as well as the needs of the congregation.
7. Has the trust and respect of the congregation.
8. Can work as a team member by putting needs of the search before personal needs.
9. Values the group's concerns more than they do any personal play for power.
10. Will make the team's tasks and functions their priority.
11. Can keep confidentialities.
12. Is teachable: willing to learn the search process and willing to do homework.
13. Willing to make this responsibility a high priority.
14. Willing to make hard decisions.
15. Willing and able to work toward consensus and abide by the group's decision.

16. Open to candidacy of any person whom God has called (i.e., less restrictive on limitations of age, race, gender, physical handicap or sexual orientation).
17. Able to serve for several months (it can take up to a year-and-a-half to find a new pastor).
18. Has an understanding of our covenant with Joy MCC



Size and Representation of a Pastoral Search Team

The church bylaws may indicate how a search committee is selected. It may be appointed by the church board/council or elected by the membership. In any case this should take place as soon as a pastoral vacancy becomes known.



Considering who should serve on a Pastoral Search Team:

The traditional composition plan for a Search Team is to consider representation of various facets of church life. Since all groups rarely can be fully represented, the most important areas for representation are: church leadership council, deacons, youth, senior adults, and male and female, handicap, straight and gay and consideration for racial and ethnic diversity also helps.

Above all, we strongly urge that members of the search committee only be those that are in agreement on the vision and mission of the church. Those in opposition may cause division and great deal of tangential discussion throughout the search process.

Make sure the search committee members have in mind and heart and action a genuine concern for the whole church. Members of the committee must not simply lobby for personal preferences, but keep in mind the needs of the whole church community during deliberations.

Those chosen should be familiar with the life of the church and have been members for at least six months or regular attendees for at least 12 months

We suggest the committee be at least five people but less than ten.

Chair-person: lead the meetings

Vice Chair: support the chair and lead in the chair's absence

Secretary: take notes, record expenses of the Search team, keep good records of information gained

Spokesperson/Communication Manager: Informs the faith community of any updates in the Pastoral Selection Process via (Pulpit Updates, Joy News Update, Joy Link, Etc.)

Alternates: church appointed _____ alternate members who can step in quickly in the event of a vacancy.

The Search Team should designate someone, either the chair or another member of the committee, to communicate directly with all applicants and to make and distribute copies of

applications to committee members. If everyone does everything, then confusion will likely be the result.

NOTE: Keep the interim pastor and other staff informed of the process. If they are left out of the picture totally they may feel that they are not important. Remember that this is an important transition period in their lives as well.

Keeps the congregation informed regarding developments at least once a month even though there is little or no progress being made? Prolonged silence breeds mistrust.



Confidentiality:

From the outset, committee members must adopt an explicit code of Confidentiality. Such a code should include confidentiality about the identity of applicants the committee is considering, the status of any particular applicant, and the specific reasons for disqualifying a candidate. This is important in order to protect the self-esteem and ministry of persons the committee is considering and to avoid unnecessary anxiety and campaigning within the congregation.



Meeting frequency and length of term

The process will demand prayer, time, energy, and skill and typically take 8 to 18 months to complete.

Meeting will take place at least bi-weekly until the church profile and Assessment are completed, then more or less depending on the number of resumes and possible pastoral candidates.

Meeting Agenda

A typical meeting will be at least one hour and have an agenda similar to the following:

- a. Devotional time
- b. Personal and corporate prayer and scripture reading
- c. Discussion of Process, review of completed tasks
- d. Action items and assignments
- e. Update communication of process and prayer requests to the church
 - i. (Joy Link, Sunday News Update and other avenues of communication. prayer blog, etc.)
- f. Consultation with Church Resource Minister/ Interim Pastor
- g. Setting new assignments (who and when)
- h. Agreement on next date
- i. Prayer

Note: Allow enough grieving/transition time. Especially if the former pastor has had a long tenure, or if there were tensions with his departure, the congregation needs some time to grieve. In that case the congregation should function for a time without a pastor or engage an interim

pastor. If the former pastor has had tenure of ten or more years, a one year waiting period before hiring a new long-term pastor is advisable.

