



Evangelical Missionary
Church of Canada
Following Jesus Together

Guidelines for a Pastoral Search Committee

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Guidelines for a Pastoral Search Committee

Introduction

- Trust the Lord!
- Jesus is the Lord of the church and it is important for the congregation and leadership team to exercise real and practical faith. God is still on the throne!
- DON'T RUSH BUT BE PURPOSEFUL IN YOUR PROGRESS.
- All pastoral appointments are made through the assistance of the National team. Keep the Regional Minister (RM) "in the loop" throughout the process. The placement of a pastor is done in the context of a triangular relationship: Prospective pastor/ Congregation/ A member of the EMCC National Team. As such it is important that each one in the process understands and works within the agreed upon protocols. The RM must approve a candidate before appointment of a regular interim or a regular pastor. Where there has been a divorce on the part of a candidate or the candidate's spouse, that individual cannot be considered before the "extenuating circumstances" process has happened. The RM needs to be kept informed on a regular basis in order to keep up with his part in the process. A monthly call from the chair of the search committee to the RM is usually sufficient, but more contact may be needed depending on the demands of the particular circumstances at a given moment.

Transitional Pastors

Should we consider a transitional pastor?

- An TRANSITIONAL PASTOR (TP) is a good option especially if there has been a lengthy tenure of a pastor, a major church struggle, a difficult leaving of the previous pastor, or a financial shortfall. The TP is often a part-time pastor.
- Transitional Pastors have training on the specifics of leading a congregation through transition and preparing for a new pastor.
- The 8 Recommended Goals of a Transitional Leadership Process are:
 1. There is the need for closure: dealing with the past in such a way that it doesn't hinder or restrict what God is wanting to do in the future. A Transitional Leader counsels & helps people deal with their grief and loss - as well as celebrating the past and learning to let go in a healthy way so they can move on.
 2. There is the need for relevant preaching & clear communication: not just filling in while they wait for the next pastor, but sermons that are messages from God designed with this church in mind.
 3. There's a need for short term administration: there is the management function that the transitional leader needs to do or ensure is being done by someone
 4. There's a need for pastoral care: the congregation continues to need a transitional leader who ensures that people are cared for even if he or she does not fulfill that function.
 5. Focus needs to be given to relational renewal: "relationship renewal" refers to the connections both with God and with each other - during a transition, the opportunity is there to renew, restore and revive any weak or poorly functioning connections
 6. There's opportunity for vision renewal: Healthy churches have a vision and an action plan to bring it into reality. A time of transition can be a time for the whole congregation to listen and discern what God is saying to them. It can be an incredibly healthy thing for the church to see where God is leading them so that their next pastor can match who they are and where they are wanting to go.

7. There's an opportunity for structural renewal: If the structures of a church are mismatched or in need of review, a time of transition is an excellent time to renew them - for the purpose of achieving their mission.
8. Then lastly, a transitional leader takes a congregation through a search process: There's no denying that God has a specific leader(s) for every church that is listening and responding to Him. The greater prepared the church is to move forward in a healthy way, the more successful the search process will become.

Interim Pastor

- Another option is an interim pastor - Retired or semi-tired pastors who serve interim capacities typically have a great store of experience that they can draw on and are therefore able to step into a situation and begin to minister effectively very quickly. An experienced pastor often brings a sense of stability to a congregation during a time of uncertainty simply because there is an experienced hand on the tiller.

Establishing the Search Committee

1. Establish your Pastoral Search Committee. Your local bylaws may specify the process for you. If not, we suggest that you establish a Search Committee of 3-7 individuals -- enough to allow for differing evaluation of candidates but not too large that you cannot come to a decision. If you choose to make your Board the Search Committee be aware that some elements of your congregation may not be well represented. It is a good idea to choose a third of the committee from the membership at large. You may want to present your search committee to the membership for approval.
2. The Committee should meet and organize by electing a chairman and a secretary as well as scheduling regular meetings.
3. The RM is to be kept informed of your work. It is helpful for the RM to be present for your first meeting. Their guidance and advice can help you through this important time. They may be able to provide resumes of available or potential candidates as well as to help you with procedural issues. It is his responsibility to assist you in your search for a pastor. The RM may appoint a representative to work with you in the process.
4. The Search Committee is responsible to recommend to the Board the calling of a Pastor, having first evaluated the needs and best interests of the Church as a whole through consultation with the Membership. The Search Committee should make such arrangements as necessary to properly interview, meet, assess the skills, gifting, and experience of the prospective pastor and to otherwise assure that the Church has an adequate basis for voting on the recommendation. As much as possible, the Search Committee should work toward a consensus recommendation of a candidate to the Board. A detailed report setting forth the finding of the Search Committee should be prepared and made available to the Board.
5. The Board would make the recommendation of the candidate to the congregation.

Work of the Search Committee

1. This is a spiritual discernment process, not just a job search. Remember that you are exercising spiritual leadership in that you are doing the work to discover whom the Lord has prepared to step in as the next pastoral leader.
2. Use pastoral search team checklist (Appendix 1).
3. Keep the congregation informed on a regular basis about process! Even if you cannot report names you can report what the committee has been doing.
4. Update the RM on at least a monthly basis of your work, or as needed.

5. Develop a profile of both your community (history, demographics, website, services, etc.), church/congregation profile (history, demographics, ministries, etc.), and a profile of the pastor/candidate (job description) you are searching for at this time. If you have profiles on file, be sure to review and update them as the structure of your church and the direction of pastoral ministry could have changed over the years. The congregation can help in this process with their response to properly worded surveys. The profile writing exercise gives church leadership an opportunity to reconsider direction, provide clarification for the search process, and gives prospective applicants an understanding of the expected ministry. (You can use Congregational Survey resource for church and pastoral profiles in Appendix 2)
6. Send your profiles to your RM for review and posting
7. Direct potential applicants to the EMCC.ca website for ministry opportunities.
8. Secure resumes of prospective candidates.
9. Remember to treat the resumes as confidential documents!
10. Meet to consider prospective applicants resumes. Pray about which ones the Committee should investigate further.
11. Churches have a right to seek out pertinent information from the applicant's previous employers; however it is recommended that signed consent is received from the applicant. (See Previous Employers Consent Form in Appendix 3)
12. Interview Process
 - The Pastoral Search Committee should meet at a convenient time to interview the candidate. Question them thoroughly in regard to doctrinal positions and philosophy of ministry, and any other questions that might pertain to their ministry job description.
 - Allow them to ask questions that they may have of the Committee about the church, etc.
 - Make sure you complete reference checks.
 - Note the EMCC will require a national vulnerable sector reference police check.
13. If your candidate is outside the EMCC STOP and contact the RM for EMCC vetting.
14. If possible, hear the candidate preach through video or by attending their present church.
15. The Search Committee may interview as many applicants as it wishes.

The Recommendations

1. The Search Committee should recommend only one candidate at a time to the Board. This recommendation must come with an 85% [set your own standard, but make it at least 75%] approval from the Search Committee.
2. The Board will approve the search committee's recommendation by an 85% vote.
3. Contact the RM BEFORE you invite a person to candidate to have RM approval to proceed.
4. If the person is not credentialed with the EMCC there will be a need for an EMCC Pre-Screen process.

Candidating

1. Keep the RM informed of what you are doing, and only call for a congregational vote when you are convinced the candidate is the one you want to serve. The congregational vote is ratification of the Board's recommendation; it is NOT part of the search process.
2. Schedule a visit (or visits) with various groups in the church.
3. Have candidate speak in worship service
4. Have a time of after-service refreshments, combined with sharing a testimony or a time of questions and answers.

The Vote

1. The name of the candidate should be placed before the Membership by the Board at a special meeting called for the purpose of hearing the report from the Search Committee and voting upon such recommendation.
2. Only one name for the position of Pastor shall be presented to the Membership at any one time for consideration. Upon the eighty percent (80%) [set your own standard, but make it at least 75% preferable!] approval of the Members voting.
3. The congregational vote should be a 'Yes-No' vote. The decision is based upon a vote by church members, but it is good to let adherents express their opinion. This can easily be done by using different coloured ballots.
4. Often a pastoral candidate will preach just prior to a congregational vote (the vote is not necessarily taken in the same meeting). Sometimes a week or weekend visit is planned to give opportunity for interaction with several key groups in the church.

Notification of the Result

1. Notify the candidate immediately of the results of the vote. If they received the majority required, they should know exactly how many votes were cast for and against them. If they did not receive the majority required, it is not necessary to say how many were for or against them, but simply that the Lord did not lead in that way at this time.
2. If the prospective candidate is approved by the membership, they should be given up to a week, or longer if they request it, to make their decision to accept or reject.
3. Communicate details to the congregation (eg. Start dates, etc.)
4. In the event that the prospective Pastor does not accept the position, then the Search Committee shall resume its function in finding another recommendation.
5. The Church may want to (a) communicate to local media. (b) prepare a reception and installation service for the new pastor and help them get settled.
6. A Regional Minister is to be advised promptly of the outcome of any pastoral vote.
7. Contact the RM to set up an installation service.

APPENDIX 1 - Pastoral Search Team Checklist

LEADERSHIP TEAM	Completed on...(date)	DETAILS
Have Read Pastoral Search Guidelines		
Have Considered an Transitional Leader / Interim Pastor - https://www.transitionalleadership.org/ (or ask your RM)		
Have established Search Committee		
Have ensured Search Committee is clear on its mandate and role		
SEARCH COMMITTEE		
Before You Contact Anyone		
Have completed our Community Profile		
Have completed our Congregational Profile		
Have completed a Candidate Profile		
Have formulated a Compensation Package – what do we have to offer		
Have developed a Communication Plan: Congregation, Leadership, RM		
The Search: Building the Pool		
Have received resumes from RM office		
Have received resumes from other sources		
Have posted job Description – See next page		
Have finished Preliminary Checks and assessments, including Consent to contact previous Employers		
Have chosen the Candidate & checked with RM		
If Candidate outside EMCC STOP – Check with RM		
The Candidate: The First Choice		
Have completed Reference checks: detailed		
Have conducted Interviews		
Have heard candidate preach in their context		
Have given recommendation of Search Committee		
Have received Endorsement of Leadership Board		
Credentialed with EMCC?		
Presenting & Calling the Candidate		
Have obtained Approval of RM to proceed		
Have introduced Candidate to the Congregation		
Have heard Candidate preach for a Call		
Held Vote of Membership (80% recommended)		
Have communicated vote results to candidate and RM		
Received Candidate's response (accept or decline)		
Ending the Search		
Have Discussed Terms with Candidate (Support: EMCC Guidelines; Length of Term; Review)		
Have made Final Report to Leadership: Things we learned; recommendations		

Have posted job with other Churches, Colleges

1. EMCC You are already on this site - <https://www.emcc.ca/emcc-home/engage/stay-informed/ministry-opportunities/>;
2. RMC (EMCC) Calgary - <http://www.rockymountaincollege.ca/job-board/church-opportunities.html>;
3. Emmanuel Bible College, (EMCC, Kitchener) <http://emmanuelbiblecollege.ca/jobs/post>)
4. Peace River Bible Inst. - <https://www.prbi.edu/MinistryPositions> - Might have to contact them for a posting.
5. Ambrose University Calgary - <https://jobboard.ambrose.edu/>
6. Miller College, Sask - <https://www.millarcollege.ca/ministry-opportunities/>
7. Taylor College and University, Edmonton - <http://www.taylor-edu.ca/employment>
8. Other services (<https://christianjobs.ca/>); Payment for advertising is required
9. Christian periodicals like Faith Today at your discretion.

APPENDIX 2 – CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

BOARD/CONGREGATION RESPONSE

There are no right or wrong answers. This will help me in focusing on ministry.

Read Revelation 2-3 and reflect on questions 1-3.

1. What would God say is a strength of your church? What is one thing He would like about your church?

2. Describe one area where God would say that your church needs to grow in?

3. What are the opportunities in front of us that God wants us to engage?

4. List in order of priority what you feel are the three most important ministries (jobs) you would like your pastor to do. (eg. Visioning, preaching, visitation, leadership development, evangelism, administration, training, teaching, disciple making development, community involvement, etc.)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

5. List in order of priority what you feel are the three most important ministries you would like your church to be doing. (eg. Community involvement, small groups, disciple making huddles, biblical teaching, caring for the needy, prayer, worship, Adult, Youth, or Children's ministries, etc.)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

6. Where do you envision you would like your church to be in 5 - 10 years? What picture of your church comes to mind? What would you be celebrating?

7. Are there any areas of conflict or barriers to growth in the church that you have seen in the past or at present? If so, Explain.

8. OTHER COMMENTS

PLEASE RETURN TO CHURCH OFFICE BY:

APPENDIX 3 – EMPLOYER CONSENT FORM

Previous Employer Consent Form

I, _____, give consent for _____
(Job Applicant) (Church in Search Process)

to contact my former employers and conduct background checks for the purpose of collecting information to make a hiring decision. The information is “reasonably required” for the establishment of the employee relationship and to determine the applicants suitability for the position.

(Printed Name of Applicant)

(Printed Name of Church Rep)

(Signature of Applicant)

(Signature of Church Rep)

(Date)